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Search the Scriptures.—JOHN 5, 39.

What is written in the Law? How readest thou?—LUKE 10, 26.

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A

Catechism of the Bible,

FOR

BIBLE CLASSES, SUNDAY SCHOOLS,

AND

PRIVATE SCHOOLS.

A word fitly spoken; is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.
PROVERBS 25, 11.

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PREFACE.

THIS little Catechism of the Bible was begun for our own Bible Class, in the Sunday School of Calvary Church, Clifton. We now offer it for publication, hoping it may afford assistance to the younger Teachers, and to the scholars, who can study it either with or without a Teacher. It is hoped that the chapters or references will be consulted and studied as the student proceeds. The Catechism is divided into Lessons. Should these Lessons be too long for some classes, they can readily be subdivided. In this attempt to portray and connect the leading events of the Bible, in these condensed sketches, many important omissions may occur to the reader. But if the truths we have presented will serve as a *key* to unlock other golden mysteries in our Book of Life, we have not written in vain.

This little volume is dedicated to the Rector of Calvary Church, Rev. Dr. Edmund Rowland, and to the Sunday School, by their co-worker,

MRS. E. W. B. PHELPS.

CLIFTON, CINCINNATI,
May 21st, 1883.

CATECHISM.

LESSON I.

FROM ADAM TO THE DELUGE.

B. C. 4004—2348 (1656 years.)

"Hail holy light! Before the sun,
Before the heavens thou wert."

What is recorded in the first chapter of Genesis?

In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth. The earth was without form and void; darkness was upon the face of the deep: the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light, and there was light.

Is it supposed that when God called matter into existence, that He finished His work in six days, or in six geological periods?

Learned and godly men believe that, while the Spirit of God [1]moved upon the earth, that He was preparing the earth, through long geological periods, as a residence for man, and for all living creatures. But man can make no just estimate of the time that intervened between chaotic matter and the time that God saw every thing that He had made, and behold it was very good.

1 "Thou, O Spirit, from the first
Was present, and with mighty wings outspread,
Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast abyss,
And mad'st it pregnant."—*Milton.*

Is not the creation of Adam and Eve in the first chapter?

All the creations of God are in the first chapter. After the light is created, and the waters are separated

from the waters, and the earth appears, then in the third period comes the grass, and the herbs bearing seed; in the fourth period the sun and stars are seen in the firmament in their appointed places.

Does it not appear that God in the fifth period speaks to the waters to bring forth abundantly?

Yes, and in the sixth day or period, He said: "Let the earth bring forth," and beasts of every kind appeared. In the evening of the sixth period, God said: "Let us make man in our image," and to man He gave dominion.

Is not the creation of the woman mentioned in the second chapter?

Yes. God took a "side" or rib out of Adam and made woman. "And Adam said, this is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman for she was taken out of man."

Are not the words used, when God makes man, quite different from the words used in creating the fish of the sea, the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field?

Yes. And God said, Let us make man *in our image*, after *our likeness;* it is said in the second chapter that God formed man of the dust of the earth, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. And Adam gave names to all living creatures.

What is specially found in the third chapter?

The temptation of the evil one, (symbolized under the form of the serpent), the Fall, and an obscure promise of Redemption.

What is meant by the Fall?

When our first parents were created in Eden God imposed upon them a law, they disobeyed this law, and therefore fell from the state of innocence in which they had been created.

Was not a promise of Redemption given to Eve?

A promise was given that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. The seed of the woman, our blessed Lord bruised the serpent's head when He rejected His temptations, and when He rose triumphant from the grave, thereby overcoming sin and death.

Is there not an utterance of St. Paul in his fifth chapter to the Romans bearing upon this subject?

St. Paul says much in connection with it: "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive."

Was sacrifice for sin made at an early time?

Yes; Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam, made offerings to God. Abel from his flocks, and Cain from the fruits of the earth. The offering of Abel was probably the appointed one, it was accepted. Cain's offering was not accepted; Cain, in wrath, rose up against Abel, his brother, and slew him. Seth a third son afterward occupied the place of Abel.—*See Genesis, 4th Chapter.*

When did Noah live?

Noah was the ninth in descent from Adam. Noah was of the family of Seth, the son of Lamech, and the grand-son of Methuselah. The descendants of

Seth are those called in the sixth chapter, "sons of God," meaning godly men, and by the "daughters of men" are meant the descendants of Cain who were not faithful to God.

Are not the alliances of the families of Seth and Cain given as a cause of the increased wickedness of the people?

Yes, this is the plain inference drawn from the sixth chapter. Noah only was just and found grace in the sight of the Lord. It is probable that the human inhabitants of the world, were at this time confined to the regions where they were at first created.

Do you suppose that the flood was partial or universal?

We suppose it was partial, as the flood was sent to punish the wickedness of man, the descendants of Seth and Cain. The expression, "all the earth," means all that land.

How long B. C. was the ark built, and how long were Noah and his family confined to the ark?

According to the usual Chronology, the flood was sent 2348 B. C. Noah went into the ark with his wife, three sons and their wives, and his possessions. "Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, and unclean by twos." (Those that part the hoof and chew the cud were clean.)—*7th Chap. Gen.* They remained one year in the ark.

Did not Noah offer sacrifices when he came out of the ark?

Yes, he built an altar to God and offered clean beasts upon it. God gave to man the "bow in the clouds" as a symbol that the habitations of man would no more be destroyed by a flood. "While

the earth remaineth, seed time nor harvest, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease "

To what lands did the children of Noah go, before they dispersed themselves?

They settled first in the plains of Mesopotamia, between the Euphrates and Tigris. The generations of Noah increased rapidly. A curse is pronounced upon Ham for irreverence to his father, but it seems to be specially visited on Canaan his son—a blessing is pronounced upon Shem and "enlargement" to Japheth.

Did not the sons of Ham build cities?

Yes, Nimrod built Babel and other cities. In 2247 B.C. some of these enterprising builders joined together to built a lofty tower in Babel. Some think it was a building dedicated to Nimrod or Belus, already they were beginning to be idolatrous. Their language in a mysterious way became confounded, so that one no longer understood the language of the other.

Did not Ham's descendants get the best regions of the earth?

It has been said so, as Canaan's sons settled in Palestine called the land of Canaan, and Misraim or Menes obtained Egypt. But Asshur, son of Shem gave his name to Assyria, and his son Ninus built Nineveh. Elam another descendant of Shem settled Persia.

LESSON II.

CALL OF ABRAHAM.

1921 B. C.

Did not Heber, or Eber, give his name, who was a descendant of Shem, to the Hebrēw people?

Yes. Terah, a descendant of Eber, was the head of a pastoral family of three sons—Abram, Nahor and Haran. Their native place was Ur. This place was afterwards the seat of the Babylonian monarchy.

Why did Abraham leave this country?

It is said that Abraham stood alone in a tribe of idolaters as the worshipper of the one great Creator. He felt that the voice of God called upon him to leave that country.

Where did he go?

He went to the land of Canaan; his wife Sarah, his father and his nephew Lot went with him. He there received a promise that his posterity should inherit the land. But the Canaanite dwelt there.

In what words did the spirit of God, afterwards, make another revelation to Abraham?

"In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice."—*Gen:* 22, 18.

How was this prophecy fulfilled?

In the birth of Jesus Christ, who was descended through Mary, from Isaac, the child of Abraham, and the child of promise.

Had not Abraham another son?

Yes. Ishmael was the son of Hagar, an Egyptian bond-maid. He was the ancestor of the Arabs, as Isaac was the ancestor of the Hebrews. (See the history of Hagar in the 15th and 21st chapters of Genesis).

Was polygamy permitted among the Jews?

Yes. When the first wife had no child, the husband took another wife, sometimes at the request of the true wife.

Did not the Hebrews dwell in tents?

Yes; unlike the children of Ham, who built cities, the children of Shem dwelt in tents.

Did not Lot, the nephew of Abraham, dwell in Sodom?

Yes. Read the 18th chap. of Genesis, which contains the intercessory prayers of Abraham for that city.

What type of the great sacrifice was this Patriarch permitted to offer?

Abraham, at the command of God, bound his son Isaac, and prepared him, as it were, for a burnt offering on Mount Moriah. A lamb was caught in a thicket, near this spot, and offered in Isaac's stead. 22 *Gen.*

Does not our Lord allude to this type when he says, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad." —*John* 8, 56.

Where did the children of Japheth migrate?

The children of Javan found a home in the isles of the Mediterranean sea, and on the Southern coasts.

Japheth's descendants too became wild horsemen in Northern Asia. They had the promise of enlargement.

Who is regarded as a model of conjugal faith?

Isaac, the husband of Rebecca.

What sons had Isaac?

Esau and Jacob—twin brothers. Esau was entitled to the birth-right and to his father's special blessing. Esau sold his birth-right when hungry and thirsty for a mess of pottage —*Gen.* 25. He lost the special blessing through the treachery of his mother and brother.

What were some of the consequences to Jacob for this deception?

Jacob fled from his father's house through fear of Esau. Esau afterwards went to Edom; he married a daughter of Ishmael. In after years Esau met his brother with affection—*Genesis* 33.

What were some of the incidents of the life of Jacob during his years of absence from his father's house?

On the first night of his journey he had a remarkable dream and vision. He made at that time his first *true* prayer to God. When he awoke he felt that God was with him. He exclaims, "How dreadful is this place! This is the house of God, the gate of heaven."

What vows did he make to God?

And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and keep me in the way that I go, and give

me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace—then the Lord shall be my God. This stone shall be a pillar in the house of my God, and I will give a tenth of all that thou give me. He called this place Bethel.—*Chap.* 28, *Gen.*

Did he not have a vision?

He saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, and he saw angels ascending and descending.

To what place did Jacob go?

He goes to a place called Haran, the birth-place of his tribe, the former home of his mother. He lives with Laban, his uncle. He suffered much from the injustice of his uncle. Jacob marries the two daughters of Laban,—Leah and Rachel.

How long did he live with Laban?

About twenty years. As he was returning to his home in Canaan his wife Rachel died, at the birth of her son Benjamin. Jacob was now the father of twelve sons, called the twelve Patriarchs.

In what chapters of Genesis do we find the story or drama of Joseph and his brethren?

In eight chapters of Genesis, beginning with the 37th, (the 38th chapter is excluded). The beautiful history ends with the 45th chapter. Then follows the migration of the family into Egypt and their settlement in Goshen.

What were the words of Jacob when he stood before Pharaoh?

And Jacob said, "Few and evil have the days of my years been. I have not attained to the years of my fathers." Joseph presented first five of his brethren to the king. And Pharaoh said, "What is your occupation?" And they said, "Thy servants are shepherds, we and our fathers." Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How old art thou?" "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are 150 years."

Did not Jacob pronounce a blessing upon Pharaoh?

Yes, the sojourner and pensioner blessed the king. Joseph gave his father and brethren a possession in Rameses or Goshen. Seventy of this family, besides their wives, settled in Goshen about 1707.

Were there no true worshippers of God except this family of Jacob?

Yes; probably many of whom we have no record. Jethro, of Midian, was a true worshipper. The Edomites kept the knowledge of God for a long time. Johab, mentioned in Chronicles as a descendant of Esau, is supposed to be identical with Job.

Is it known when Job lived?

No. Some think before Moses. We only know that he wrote one of the most beautiful books in the Bible. He is the most descriptive of the inspired poets. He utters this prophecy: "I know that my Redeemer liveth and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth."—*See Job* 19, 25.

Did not Reuben, Simeon and Levi, the elder sons of Jacob, forfeit the foremost places by their sins and crimes?

Yes; these places passed to Judah and Joseph. Jacob reproves Reuben for instability, and Simeon and Levi for cruelty in their treatment of the inhabitants of Shechem. The patriarchs lived in *the infancy of society*. They believed in the unity of God, in his omnipotence and providence; yet the account given of them by the inspired historian, is rather *historical* than exemplary.

From which of the sons of Jacob were the priests descended?

From the tribe of Levi, but not until the third generation. God chose Aaron and all his descendants to exercise the ministry of the priesthood. Besides the sons of Aaron, all the tribe of Levi were set apart as Levites to serve the priests, The priests alone could offer sacrifice.

Was there no priestly office before the Aaronic priesthood?

We read of several priests as Melchisedec, and Jethro, and Balaam; but the first Jewish priest according to the Mosaic ritual, is Aaron, the high-priest and head of the Jewish priesthood.

How were Manasseh and Ephraim, the sons of Joseph, counted among the tribes?

They were counted as half tribes in the place of Joseph. Abundant blessings were invoked by Jacob when dying, on Joseph and his posterity.

What promise was made to Judah?

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah until Shiloh come."—*See Gen.* 49, 10. Shiloh was a name

for the Messiah. The tribe of Judah was the kingly tribe. Our Savior is called in the apocalypse, "The lion of the tribe of Judah."

LESSON III.

MOSES.

How long did the Israelites live in Egypt, and how large a number crossed the Red Sea?

There has been much controversy on these two points in their history. It is generally thought that when the sacred writers say 430 years as the length of their sojourn, they mean to count from Abraham's day; and when they say 600,000 males, they mean to include men, women and children; and again it is conceded that primitive Hebrew notation is very imperfectly understood.

Must not the increase of the Hebrews have been great, as their numbers excited the jealousy of the king, lest they should rise as insurgents and overturn his throne?

In modern times jealousies of this kind have existed, and in Egypt changes of dynasties and insurrections have frequently occurred, and at a very early period there was an irruption of shepherd kings.

How was the short-sighted policy of the Pharaoh that "knew not Joseph" made of none effect?

The child exposed to danger in consequence of "his murderous ordinance," was saved by Pharaoh's daughter, nursed by a loving, pious mother, and

educated in Pharaoh's court in all the learning of the Egyptians.

Is it known how much of God's truth remained during their long vassalage?

No; they had intermitted circumcision. Perhaps Jochebed, the mother of Moses. was a very pious woman, and had uttered a prayer for her child's safety with every osier that she twisted in the ark of bulrushes. She placed her daughter Miriam near by to watch the helpless one, who in the providence of God was to be the leader and lawgiver of her people.

Is there not a beautiful series of providences in this whole story?

Yes. The mother becomes the nurse of the child, and the child reared in the king's palace, becomes learned in the wisdom of the Egyptians, and prepared for the high office that he was destined to fill.

Was it not patriotism or love of his race that moved him to interfere in the contest of the Egyptians and Israelites?

The nobility of his soul is made manifest wherein he takes part with his oppressed countryman, the effeminacy of Pharaoh's court had not corrupted him, the killing was an accident, he becomes in consequence an exile. May not this circumstance have suggested to him, long afterwards, to provide cities of refuge.

Did he not flee to Midian and become a member of the family of Jethro?

Though Jethro was a worshipper of the true God, nothing is revealed of the *faith* or religion of Moses until God reveals himself by fire in the burning bush,

then, like St. Paul, his soul is kindled with burning zeal; yet he doubts himself: "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth my people out of Egypt?" And God said, "I will be with you, go, gather the Elders of Israel tell them that 'Iam' hath sent you unto them, the God of your fathers, of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob.

Does not Moses still doubt?

Yes, he says, "I am not eloquent, I am of slow speech." And the Lord said, "Is not Aaron the Levite, thy brother? I know that he can speak well. He shall be thy spokesman and thou shall be to him as God. He will meet thee at Horeb." And Moses said, "Oh my Lord, send by him who Thou wilt send."

Does not the message that God sent to the Elders prove that they possessed traditions of their fathers?

It is believed, that the family of Abraham when they migrated from Chaldea took with them to Canaan traditions in a written form. "Learned men have recently deciphered on the ruins of Babylon, similar or parallel relations with those of Genesis. But the Babylonians degenerated into Polytheism, while the Hebrews preserved Monotheism—the knowledge and worship of one God by divine inspiration."—*Le Normant*

Who were the Elders to whom Moses was sent?

They were the heads of the tribes. In the Hebrew Commonwealth each city had its Elders. Moses and Aaron appear before the king and urge a request that

they should lead their people out of the land. The Pharaoh, who now sat upon the throne, was an oppressive tyrant, though he was very jealous of the number and power of the Hebrews, he was unwilling to part with so many useful subjects.

Were their not miracles wrought by Moses in the presence of the King, and many afflictions sent upon the land before Pharaoh consented to let them go?

Yes. This history of Moses and Pharaoh is contained in ten chapters of the book of Exodus, from the fourth to the fourteenth.

What great National Festival was instituted before they left Egypt?

This religious festival was called the Passover. It was instituted on account of the tenth plague that afflicted Egypt. It was ordained that the Angel of Pestilence should strike with death a member of every Egyptian household. To avoid this plague the Hebrews were required to sacrifice a lamb in every family. The Israelites, on that night, were commanded to touch the lintels of their houses with the sacrificial blood, this evidence of their faith would save them from the penalty incurred by the Egyptians. The Angel passed over the houses of the Hebrews. And the Festival of the Passover was from this time regularly kept.

After this terrible affliction, did not Pharaoh yield to the wishes of the Hebrews?

Yes, he consented. The Hebrews passed over the Red Sea in safety, while the King repenting of his

permission sent his host to pursue them, they attempting to follow "sank like lead in the swollen waters."

About what period of the world's history did Moses lead his people out of Egypt?

Moses the most heroic of leaders and wisest of legislators, entered the wilderness of Arabia, in the year 1491, according to the most reliable chronology. They, the people, were supplied with manna for bread, quails, too, were "brought" by a strong wind, they had water from the rock but the water was bitter. Moses threw into the fountain the branch of a tree and the water was made sweet.

Is not manna (*See sixth chap. of St. John. 32 v.*) still produced in that region?

Travelers tell us that a species of Tamarisk still produces a sweet substance that the Arabs call "Mann." The miraculous part of this transaction was the large supply and the double supply on the sixth day.

Does not the fifteenth chapter of Exodus contain Moses' famous song of victory?

Yes, it is a grand ode, sung by Moses and the Elders, (*Numbers* 11, *chaps.* 16, 17, 24, 25.) and as they sing Miriam and the women in Israel chant responsively, "Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously, the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea." But the song of victory is scarcely ended when murmurs arise on account of a want of water.

Has not the water of that vicinity also been investigated by travelers?

Yes; they say the waters of this region are often impregnated by an alkaline salt that can be removed or made sweet by a vegetable acid.

Where did the Israelites stop for a time after the miraculous passage?

"Within a Peninsula made by the Red Sea, amid the peaks of Horeb, in this place was probably chanted the thanksgiving song, to which we have alluded.

Is not the going out of Egypt called an Exodus?

The second book of the Pentateuch is called Exodus for this reason. Milman and other writers say, that the Egyptians preserved records of this event. From these records the Greeks derived their disfigured stories of the Exode. The Greeks could have had no access to these records until centuries after the miracle.

Was not this great event constantly alluded to in the ~~in~~ frequent history of the Jewish people?

It was a favorite subject of national poetry. By this event they learned the power of God, but it was difficult to convey to the minds of the nation a sense of the holiness of God. To convey this idea was probably the meaning of the divers washings in the Jewish ritual.

LESSON IV.

WILDERNESS.

Were they disturbed in their onward passage?

The congregation "pitched at Rephidim." Here the people clamored for water. Moses was directed to smite the rock, and the waters gushed forth.—*Exodus* 17.

Was it not at Rephidim that Israel was attacked by Amalek?

Yes, according to Josephus a confederacy of Amalekite chiefs, of the wilderness, attacked them. To Joshua was given the military command, while Moses, Aaron and Hur, in the sight of the people, stood on an eminence lifting their hands in prayer.

Were they successful?

The valour of the Israelites, sustained by the faith of their leaders in God, gave them victory.

What friends join the camp of Moses at this time?

Jethro, with his daughter Zipporah, Moses' wife, and his sons. Jethro seeing the continuous work of Moses, advises him to select officers to share his burdens. Seek, he said, able men, who fear God, hating covetousness, and set them over thousands and hundreds and fifties.

How long after they left Egypt was the law given?

In about fifty days after they received the ten commandments. How comprehensive, how *spiritual* is this brief code! It bears the stamp of omnipotence. When Moses wrote this law by the inspiration of Jehovah, on two tables of stone, he was near the loftiest

peak of the ridge of Mount Sinai. It was received amid terrific surroundings. Moses went down to the people and spake unto them.

Is not this moral law in the 20th chapter of Exodus?

Yes. Other laws for the government of the nation soon follow, also many ceremonial laws.

Was not Moses permitted to come near, while Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, with the seventy elders, worshipped afar off?

"Moses was on the mount 40 days."—*Exodus* 20, 21. "Moses heard the voice of God. And God said, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." And Moses said, "I beseech thee shew me thy glory."—*Exodus*, 33, 18. "No man has seen God at any time."—*John* 1, 18. "The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

Did not Moses break the first tables?

Yes. When he returned to the people he found them in rebellion. They had compelled Aaron to make an idol—a golden calf. Moses in anger, broke the tables. He then interceded with God that he might be permitted to go again to the mount. He remained another forty days in the mount. He came down with the other tables "like unto the first, and with the same words written upon them."

Did not the people now promise to obey?

Yes, some had mourned and sought the Lord; the worst rebels had been punished. The sons of Levi were the first to return to their allegiance to Moses.

Is it not said in the 25th chapter of Exodus that a model or a pattern had been given to Moses, while in the mount, of the furniture of the inner tabernacle, of the altar, table, veil, and of the ark of the covenant?

Glorious visions were doubtless revealed to Moses. Some have supposed that "a vision of creation" was given, or the manner and order in which Almighty God brought this world into existence. It must be remembered that the books of Moses were written long after the events recorded in the book of Genesis.

Have you not already said that it is believed, with reason, that the families of the Patriarchs preserved records or traditions of the earliest history of man?

We have already spoken of the similiarity of the traditions of nations. The cosmogony of Moses is more *rational* than any other. While it gives to God the *fiat* of omnipotence, the power and glory of creation, it does not exclude secondary causes. The order which Moses assigns to the different epochs of creation is said to be the same as that which has been deduced by geologists.

Is it known when writing was invented?

It must have been of early antiquity, as Job speaks of inscriptions on the rocks with an iron pen, and of writing in a book or roll. Written characters have been found in Egypt anterior to the exodus. The Greeks say that Cadmus, a Phenician, introduced sixteen letters of the alphabet into Greece about fourteen centuries B. C. As Phenicia was a country bordering on Palestine, the assumption is that Phenicia learned letters from the people of Palestine.

Do you not suppose that Moses learned alphabetic writing in Egypt?

The origin of all the arts and sciences is ascribed to Egypt. Moses doubtless learned writing in Egypt, as he was skilled in all the learning of the Egyptians, and employed it in writing his books.

Have not some writers tried to rob Moses of the glory of writing the Pentateuch, and attempt to prove it the writing of a later time?

The manners and customs and ideas of the Hebrews as related in the five books, prove their antiquity. Milman says, "I must acquiesce in their antiquity. It is as incredible to deny the antiquity claimed for the Pentateuch as it would be to say that Homer's poems were written after the Peloponesian war. The desert origin of certain usages cannot be disputed."

Did not Moses require the people to contribute their silver and gold and other possessions to adorn the tabernacle?

Yes, they were required to furnish many things. Jewels for the breast-plate of the high priest; onyx stones for the Ephod; also badger skins and ram skins, dyed in rich colors, purple and fine linen and shittim wood, which is a species of Acacia.

Had they brought riches from Egypt?

Yes. "They brought the wages of long years of labor."—*Exodus*, 35, 25. They had learned also many useful arts. The women spun and wove cloths of rich tissue. The district of Sinai was not barren, it abounded in the black Acacia and the Date Palm. These trees were felled by the men for the artificers.

Describe the ark of the covenant?

The ark was built of acacia, 2½ cubits long, 1½ broad, and the same in heigth. It was overlaid with pure gold within and without. The mercy seat was of pure gold of the same length, breadth and heigth as the ark. Two cherubims of gold rested on the mercy seat with wings outspread. There was a candlestick containing a talent of pure gold. (*Exodus* 25, v. 31–37). In Solomon's temple, instead of this candlestick there were ten similarly ornamented; they were taken to Babylon. In the temple of Zerubabel, there was again a single candlestick. Also an altar of burnt offering of wood, covered with brass together with the horns thereof. The ark was lifted by rings of gold.

What were the contents of the ark?

The two tables of the Law, a pot of Manna, and Aaron's Rod.

Will you describe the tabernacle?

There was a tabernacle erected by Moses for his use, to give audience to the people, to hear causes and decide controversies. But the tabernacle for the worship of God was constructed magnificently in every part. According to the pattern (*Exodus* 25, 9,) seen in the mount: "The interior of the tabernacle was subdivided into two apartments, by a richly wrought curtain, called the veil, the outer room was called the holy place, the inner room the holy of holies.

Where did they place the tabernacle when they entered Canaan?

It was first erected at Gilgal, afterwards at Shiloh, ultimately at Jerusalem until the temple was built. They sometimes placed the ark in the front of the army. It was once taken by the Philistines, which was regarded as a great calamity.

What book of Moses is especially a book of Laws?

Leviticus.

LESSON V.

THE HIGH PRIEST.

Numbers, the 4th Book of Moses, is so called because it contains an account of the numbering of all the congregations of Israel. Each tribe pitched by his own standard with the ensign of their father's house.

Is not Deuteronomy a recapitulation of the history of the Israelites?

This book contains the last words of Moses to them, and much is repeated that other books contain, but the style is somewhat different. This book was given in the fortieth year.

Were not the Israelites a homeless horde when this body of Laws, when this Pentateuch was given them?

Yes; but at no other time could these laws have been given. The books of the law were kept sacredly and strictly so long as Moses lived, and all

the days of Joshua the successor of Moses, and so long as the generation survived that were reared in the wilderness.

Were not the Hebrews made to understand that they were permitted to enter into this land not because of their righteousness, but because of the abominable sins of the Canaanites?

Yes, the priests constantly, by daily sacrifices, testify to their own sin and the sins of the people. By the Lamb without blemish sacrificed at the Passover, they were taught to expect some fuller expiation yet to come.

Did not the High Priest, Priests and Levites wear a distinctive dress?

Yes. The robe of the High Priest was very splendid, his garments (robe and ephod) were wrought curiously with gold, and blue, and scarlet, and purple. On each shoulder was an onyx stone engraved with six of the tribes. The breast-plate was ten inches square, set with twelve jewels. The High Priest alone entered the most holy place.

What of the Priests and Levites?

The dress of the Priest was more simple, usually of fine linen, woolen was not worn by the ministers of the sanctuary. The Levites assisted the Priests in the ministrations of the Tabernacle or Temple. They studied the law and were the ordinary judges of the country, but sub-ordinate to the Priests. They had no estates in land, but received tithes. The Levites wore robes or ephods of fine linen in the sanctuary.

Have we Priests in the Jewish sense under the Christian dispensation?

No. Our Lord, as our Priest, offered the one great sacrifice for the sins of the whole world

Are there not Priests in the Roman Catholic Church?

The Romanists consider them as Priests, because they think the Lord's Supper by transubstantiation becomes a real sacrifice Episcopalians call the second order in their ministry priests, because they administer the sacred symbols but not in the sense of a sacrifice.

Were not three great festivals kept at Jerusalem?

From the begining of Solomon's reign, about 1000 B. C., till the destruction of the first Temple, the tribes went up from all parts of Palestine and from other countries where they dwelt, three times a year, to observe the Passover, the Pentecost, and the feast of Tabernacles. The Passover was kept in March, the Pentecost fifty days after, and the feast of Tabernacle in September. These correspond to the great Christian festivals we now keep.

Were not the Priests and Levites divided into courses?

The Priests and Levites waited by turns weekly in the Temple. The Priests were descended from Levi through Aaron; the Levites were descended through the other sons of Levi. The Priests were divided into courses by David.

Were not the sacrifices partly expiatory and partly offerings of gratitude?

Every sin, national or individual, had its appointed atonement, and the Priest had the power of absolving the offender. The smoke from the great brassen altar ascended in the name of the whole people. On the seventh day two animals were slain instead of one. The poorest of the people were encouraged to make oblations.

Were not severe punishments inflicted on those who violated the law in an important point?

We are told of Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron, who kindled their censers from an impure source in burning incense. They were struck dead—some suppose, from the 9th verse of the 10th chapter, of Lev.: that the "strange fire" means that the priests were excited by strong drink. The warning given is: "Do not drink wine or strong drink when thou comest into the tabernacle, less thou die." This is a statute forever.

What of Korah, Dathan and Abiram?

These men were of the tribe of Reuben, from primogeniture, they claimed that their rights ought to be regarded in the government of the church and state. They rebelled against the idea of the Aaronic priesthood, and the civil sovereignty of Moses. Korah and his companions were destroyed by an earthquake. — *See Numbers XVI.* A remarkable attestation was given of the authority of Aaron. Twelve rods of almond were selected by Moses and laid in the tabernacle. The rods represented each tribe. Aaron's rod blossomed.—*Numbers* 17, 10.

Besides the great festivals, were there not ordinary feasts of a joyous description?

Yes; every seventh day was a day of rest and instruction, also a time of social intercourse. At the gates of the cities rich and poor, master and slave met together in innocent mirth. Every seventh year the Hebrew slave was free from his master, the earth was to lie fallow during this year; every fiftieth year was a year of jubilee. All estates reverted to their original owners.

Did not slavery exist among the Jews?

In a very mitigated form, the Hebrew slave was free every seventh year, for the foreign slave injunctions occur constantly in the Mosaic code requiring kindness, charity and instruction to the "stranger within their gates." "Thou shalt not rule over him with rigor, but thou shalt fear the Lord."

Why did Moses appoint cities of refuge?

The Hebrew penal law enforced the highest respect for the life of man; "blood for blood" was demanded, but the accused was committed to judicial authority. A barbarous usage however, sometimes called upon the nearest kin to avenge the death of his relative, whether by accident or malice. These cities were appointed for the homicide to find protection until the accused could have a judicial trial.

Were not the laws of Moses favorable to the poor?

Yes. The gleanings of every harvest field were left to the poor. See the story of Ruth the Moabitess, the ancestor of David.

Was not the war law of the Hebrews barbarous and severe?

A sanguinary, relentless conduct was enjoined upon them on their invasion of Canaan. Almighty wisdom determined that a bloody race, licentious and idolatrous should be extirpated; severity to the seven nations in Canaan was the *exception* not the rule. The observant reader of history will see that national sins bring their own punishment.

LESSON VI.

In what part of the wilderness did the Israelites remain longest?

Nothing is known except the names of the stations where they dwelt, most of these, are in the celebrated district around Mt. Sinai. Caravans crossed this region regularly which could supply many of their wants. About two years before they crossed the Jordan, they left their old stations and migrated to the borders of the promised land

Was it not about this time that they encamped in the land of Moab?

Yes. We are told that Balak, King of Moab, was alarmed at the entrance of so great a host upon the borders of his domain. Not knowing that the Israelites were miraculously supplied with manna he feared a famine, though Moab was at that time very fertile.

Why did he send for Balaam, a prophet of Mesopotamia?

He had heard of his wisdom and supposed sanctity, and Balak superstitiously thought that *his* God would curse or bless this people on his intercession. The history of Balaam and Balak begins in the XXII chapter of the book of Numbers. Read this history.

Was not Balaam a true prophet?

He seems to have been a worshipper of God, but like some good but infirm men in all ages, he was covetous, he listened to the voice of the tempter. He describes the encampment of the Israelites in these words, when he saw Israel abiding in his tents, according to their tribes: "How goodly are thy tents, O, Jacob, as the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as trees of lign-aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters."

Had not the Israelites severe trials on their journey to Moab?

At different stations on their way, Miriam the sister of Moses, and Aaron, the elder brother and High Priest die. Miriam dies at Kadesh and is buried there; Aaron dies on Mt. Horeb.

Who is the successor of Aaron in the priesthood?

Moses is with his brother when he dies: he takes the priestly garments of Aaron and transfers them to the eldest son of Aaron, Eleazar. All the house of Israel mourn for him thirty days.

Was not this portion of the wilderness infested by serpents?

Yes; many of the people were stung or bitten by

them, in their suffering they cried to Moses for relief. Moses was directed to put a serpent of brass (*Numbers* 21, 9,) upon a pole, to this serpent if any of them looked they were healed.

Does not our Lord quote this (*John III, 14, 15,*) as an illustration of the manner in which he would be lifted up?

We have authority in this allusion made by the Savior to the "brazen serpent," to regard it as a type of the cross on which He died, that He might heal His people of their sins and draw them unto Him.

Had the people of Israel increased in number since their departure from Egypt?

They were numbered for the third time just before they crossed the Jordan, and were found to be about the same in number; many of the old ones who had come out of Egypt were dead, but the young nation was strong and vigorous.

Did not Moses before he ascended to Nebo to die, give his people a solemn charge?

In Deuteronomy 30, 31, 32, 33, he recites to the assembled people their eventful history. The old man of 120 years, pronounces a blessing upon each tribe. His song is full of tenderness, of warning and exhortation. "I call heaven and earth to witness, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing, therefore choose life." To Joshua he said: "Be strong, be of good courage."

Did not Moses appoint a ratification of the law, to take place after he had left them? Did it not take place under Joshua. and in what did it consist?

A sacrifice was offered on an altar of stones, as a testimony of their acceptance of the laws and constitution that Moses had framed for them. Six of the tribes were appointed to stand on Mount Ebal and six on Mount Gerizim. Ebal was a type of the desolation of the wicked, and Gerizim blooming and fruitful of the happiness of the obedient.

Are not Ebal aud Gerizim so situated. that every word uttered on one Mount can be distinctly heard on the other?

Yes; these two mountains face each other. In the 8th chapter of Joshua, there is an account of the actual and very solemn ratification. Curses were pronounced upon Ebal for all infractions of the moral law; and blessings on Gerizim were uttered for the devout and obedient. An altar of stones was erected by Joshua according to the injunction of Moses, and all the words of the moral law written upon the stones.

Have not all civilized nations derived much assistance in their codes from the polity of the Hebrew lawgiver?

Undoubtedly, Christianity and Mahometanism, both acknowledge their indebtedness to the Mosaic Institutes. To his own nation Moses was chieftain, historian, poet, and lawgiver.

Did not Moses die on Mount Nebo?

Yes; he ascended the Mount and looking across the Jordan, he gazed upon a magnificent prospect, and God enabled Moses to see all the land of Gilead unto Dan and Judah. He saw the city of Jericho embowered in palms. This was the first city that yielded to the prowess of Joshua.

Did not Joshua set up a memorial of his passage over the Jordan?

He erected a monument of stones, where the feet of the priests had stood that bore the ark of the covenant.

Was not Palestine, when Joshua entered it, governed by many petty kings?

Yes; five of these kings seeing the success of Joshua, combined against him. (*See Josh.* 10*th*, 11 *v.*) Joshua, by a rapid night march, overcame and defeated these Canaanites, or Amorites. It is said that a storm of hail destroyed more of these Amorites than "the swords of the children of Israel."

Do not some commentators think that the 10th of Joshua gives an account of a stupendous miracle?

This account is very differently interpreted. "Joshua spoke or prayed to the Lord, then he apostrophises the sun and moon: 'Sun stand thou still, and thou moon in the valley of Ajalon.' So the sun stood still and hasted not to go down about a whole day."

How is this understood?

Those who think a miracle is intended to be represented in these words, say that the light was prolonged by the preternatural refraction of the sun's rays, after the sun had actually sunk below the horizon They who contend for the miracle, say that a sufficient cause can be found in the death blow given to the prevailing superstition,—the worship of the sun and moon. Dean Milman thinks that the apostrophe to the heavenly bodies is a poetical account taken from the book of Jasher.

Is not this book mentioned in the 10th chapter?

Yes. "It is remarkable," says the same author, "that there is no allusion to this event in the canonical books of the Bible."

Who was Rahab?

This woman received and protected the spies of Israel in Jericho. She was acquainted with Jewish history, and believed that the Israelites were under the special protection of Heaven. The Septuagint translation has connected with the name of this woman an opprobious epithet, and from the same source it is found in Hebrews' XI, but Rosenmuller says it means the keeper of a caravansera or inn. The Jews consider the word as meaning inn-keeper.

Is not this woman careful to collect her kindred in Jericho in her home?

Yes; the spies promised to protect her property and kindred when the city is besieged if she will bind in her window a scarlet thread so that her house could be identified. By faith in the miracles reported to her, she saved her home and friends. She, Rahab, afterwards married into the royal tribe of Judah and was the mother of Boaz, the husband of Ruth.

LESSON VII.

THE JUDGES OF ISRAEL.

Will you relate an incident mentioned in Numbers 11, 29, that seems to indicate a difference in the breadth of the characters of Moses and Joshua?

On one occasion some young men of the camp

feeling that they were moved by the spirit of God, wished to exhort and instruct those about them. Joshua said to Moses, "forbid them my lord," Moses replied, "Enviest thou for my sake, would to God that all the Lord's people were prophets." This suggests a passage in the ministry of our Lord, when a disciple (St John) makes a like request.—(*Luke 9th*, 49, 50.)

How long did the Israelites live under the authority of judges?

More than 400 years. It is said that the twelve tribes lived in a general obedience to the laws of Moses, all the days of Joshua, and so long as that generation lived who remembered the history of their people in the wilderness. How could they forget the tradition received of the circumstances that surrounded the sublime gift of the Moral Law on Sinai?

Who was the first judge of Israel?

Joshua, who was at the head of the hosts of Israel when they entered the "Land of Promise," was the first judge, and Samuel was the last judge.

How were the lands divided after the conquest?

The families of Joshua and Caleb received larger grants, but the whole land was subject to the common law of property. Ephraim was the most powerful tribe in the north; Benjamin and Judah had the richest vineyards and olive groves. The tribes to the east of the Jordan were pastoral.

Was not the time of the judges a period of anarchy and ignorance?

Some events recounted in their long history would seem to justify such an idea, but it must be borne in mind that history takes more note of the infractions of law than of its observance. It has been called the heroic age, Gideon, Barak, Jepthah and Samson were heroes, who delivered their country from oppressive tyrants.

Were they religious men?

They had faith in God. They disobeyed *their* law in some points. They did not know God's love and holiness as they have been revealed to *us* by Jesus Christ. These characters are drawn in strong colors by the sacred historian (Samuel) not as models, but to exhibit how in special, trying emergencies these remarkable men, by their bravery and patriotism, delivered their afflicted countrymen by prodigies of valor. The life of Samson is so rich in incident that it has been made the subject of a drama by a great poet.

In order to describe the sufferings of the Israelites at this time, is it not said that they were compelled to reap their field in secret, and for fear of their enemies to walk through by-ways?

Yes; in this wretched state of affairs, a woman, Deborah, took the seat of judgment. She called upon Barak, who led a part of the tribes successfully against Sisera, the captain of the King of Canaan, who had nine hundred chariots of iron, and had mightily oppressed the children of Israel for twenty years.

Did not Barak have signal success?

Yes; but partly by the hands of a woman. After Sisera's defeat he fled to the house of Jael, whom he supposed to be friendly. She knowing the great evil he had done to the people she loved, struck a nail in his head while he was asleep. Israel was thus delivered.—*See Judges, chap.* IV, 21 *v.*, 26, 27.

Does not history tell us of similar acts among highly civilized people in modern times?

Yes; when a nation is goaded to desperation an act like Jael's is applauded, though in itself the act must be condemned. It was natural, was it right! No.

Does not Deborah applaud this action?

How could it be otherwise, when her down-trodden nation gained the fruits of their victory by this act. She with Barak, celebrates the grand victory in the 5th chapter, by an eloquent song. In the war with Jabin and Sisera, Issachar, Zebulon and Napthali were engaged. These wars did not involve all the tribes at the same time.

Was it not in the time of the judges that Naomi and her daughter Ruth returned from Moab to dwell among her kindred?

Yes; the story of Ruth is beautifully told. To her mother-in-law she says, "Entreat me not to leave thee, or return from following after thee. For whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people, and thy God shall be my God" Ruth, the gleaner, becomes the wife of Boaz, the kinsman of her husband and the grandmother of David —*See Book of Ruth.*

Did not Hannah, the mother of Samuel, live in the time of the judges?

Yes; though wickedness and licentiousness existed under the judges as in the case of Hophni and Phinehas, sons of Eli the priest, yet there were at this time deeply spiritual characters, such as Hannah, Samuel and Eli, and perhaps many others who did not become historical.—2d *chap. Samuel.*

Was not Samuel the last judge of Israel?

Yes; the people had suffered so much from divisions among the tribes that they begged for a king, hoping that a centralized authority would cause them to be feared and thereby give them more peace, union, and strength.

Did Samuel accede to their request?

Yes; he appointed, about 1000 B. C., Saul a Benjamite, one of the smallest of the tribes, to become the king of the united nation of Israel. Samuel was both wise and just in his judicial office. He held three seats of justice, at Bethel, at Gilgal, and at Mispeh. He lived at Ramah. He wrote the Book of Judges and the two books that bear his name.

Is it not supposed that though there was desolation among some of the tribes in the time of the judges, that there was really more peace than war during this long period?—*Sam. 5th chap.*

When they kept the laws of Moses and Joshua they had peace, when they refused to be governed by this wise code they suffered. Yet the polity of Moses was not a failure.

Did not the Philistines become a very troublesome enemy during the youth of Samuel?

Yes; the Philistines had made Gaza their capital city, near to the tribes of Simeon and Judah. They lived near the sea and were governed by lords in five cities. So troublesome had they become that the people insisted that Hephin and Phinehas, priests and sons of Eli, should go out and fight them.

Did not this army take the ark of the covenant with them?

Yes; they did this to excite enthusiasm among the people. But the people well knew the wickedness of the priests that led them. For their wicked doings in the temple, God permitted them to be overthrown and slain, and the ark was taken.

Did not this defeat cause the death of their father, Eli?

Yes; the old man fell from the gate where he was sitting, dead. Eli seems to have been humble and submissive,—"It is the Lord," said Eli, "let Him do what seemeth Him good." One of the children of Phinehas was called by his mother "Ichabod," when the ark of God was taken by the Philistines,—but Eli is censured for the deficient government of his children. It is also intimated that he had shared with his sons in the illgotten riches of the temple.

Did not Samuel command an army against the Philistines?

Yes; Samuel gathered all Israel to Mizpeh, where he fasted, prayed, and sacrificed. In the battle that followed the assemblage at Mizpeh, Samuel gained a victory. He called the name of the place of conquest "Ebenezer". The cities of Israel were restored to them.

Did not Samuel judge Israel all his life?

When he grew old he made his sons to sit in judgment. The people did not like this, but clamored for a king.

LESSON VIII.

SAUL, THE FIRST KING OF ISRAEL.

1094 B. C.

Samuel received counsel of God to grant the petition of the people. Samuel represented to the people that kings would tyrannize over them, and would seek to humble their sons and daughters. Saul reigned as king 40 years.

Did not Israel become united, warlike, and free under the sway of Saul?

Yes. Saul, in the early part of his reign did well, he had an able general in his uncle Abner, and a wise, good son in Jonathan.

Was it not in this reign that Goliath the champion of the Philistines, came up to challenge the Israelites?

Yes. David, the young son of Jesse, had come up to the army to bring refreshment to his brothers who were soldiers in the army. Hearing the defiant boast and challenge of Goliath, the soul of David kindled to enter upon the contest. His desire was so great that he appeared before the king. Saul wished David to clothe himself in armour, but he *declined* the king's offer. In his shepherd's garb he approached the gigantic combatant, with a few smooth stones from the brook he began the attack, trusting in the Lord

who had defended him from a lion and a bear. He slew this enemy of his people.

What was Saul's inquiry when he saw the young man?

Whose son is this? When Saul became unhappy and morose, David was brought to the palace to amuse the king with his music. He afterwards married Michal, the daughter of King Saul. David's military successes from this time were so great, that it roused the mad jealousy of the king.

Did not the chants of the women when they met the successful army on their return, increase the disorder of the king?

The chorus of the daughters of Israel, whose custom it was to meet the returning army, if *victorious*, was very grievous to Saul; "Saul," they chanted, "has slain his thousands, but David his ten thousands." Saul, in his madness, made it unsafe for David to remain in the palace

Did not David use many stratagems to convince Saul that he did not desire his death?

Yes; on one occasion in a dark cave he cut off the skirts of the king's tunic, to prove to him how completely he had been in his power. On another occasion he saved Saul's life on the battlefield and reproved Abner for his carelessness.—*See XXVI chap.* 1, *Samuel.* The king seemed touched with these evidences of David's faith, but his jealous suspicions soon regained ascendency.

Was not Saul killed in a battle with the Philistines?

He and his admirable son Jonathan fell on the

mountains of Gilbon. The grief of David was genuine for the loss of Saul and his son, though he gained *a crown*. David mourned bitterly for Jonathan, "He loved me with a love passing the love of women." Saul and Jonathan were lovely in their lives, and in their deaths were not divided.—Read *III chap.*, 2d *Samuel 7th verse*, the story of Rispah's motherly affection.

Did not David become king at the death of Saul?

He was king for seven years over Judah and Benjamin. Meanwhile Abner was employed in keeping the other tribes for Saul's son, Ishbosheth, but from some disgust he, Abner, forsook the cause of Saul's son and joined the cause of David. Joab was the great general of David. On Abner's defection, David became king of all Israel.

Did not David become a great military leader?

Yes. He extended the kingdom on every side. With the aid of his captain Joab, all the adjacent nations became tributary,—Philistines, Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites. The land around Moriah had been conquered in the time of Joshua. The fortress however, still belonged to the Jebuites.

Did not David offer the chieftainship of the army to him who should scale the precipice?

Yes. Joab clambered up the cliff, dashed the defenders down, and was proclaimed *captain* of the host. The city was immediately occupied and became the capital of the new kingdom and the royal residence.

Had not this town formerly been called Salem, and did not David now call it Jerusalem?

This city then became the sacred city of the Jews, a glorious city in the time of David and Solomon. David removed his court from Hebron, but above all he brought thither the ark of the covenant. This was the day of a great festival. It is said that seven psalms bear traces of this festival.—*See the sublime words of the 15th, 19th and 24th Psalms.*

Did not Michal, the wife of David, feel offended at his enthusiasm on this occasion?

Yes; they were probably separated from this time. —*2d Samuel*, 6–21.

Did not this king commit two deadly sins in the early part of his kingly life?

Yes. David wished to marry Bathsheba, the wife of a captain of his army. To accomplish this wicked design, David directed that Uriah should be placed in the front of the battle, Uriah fell in battle, when the king was far away, but in the sight of God, David was his murderer. Nathan, the prophet, is sent to reprove David in the parable of the ewe-lamb.—*Read 12th of 2d Samuel.* David said, "I have sinned against the Lord." The consequences of this sin could never be wiped out upon earth, but his sin was remitted in heaven His penitence was deep. He was sorely chastened.

Is not the 51st Psalm a proof of his penitence?

It is so considered. The psalms of David are echoed through the courts of the Lord to this day. These psalms are a treasure to the penitent spirit; they are wells of refreshment to the weary soul.

David showed great tenderness of soul at the death of his son Absalom.—*2d Samuel, 19th chapter.*

Did David write all the psalms?

No. There are 150 psalms. Many of the most beautiful (*see* 1, 15, 18, 23,) are attributed to him. Some of the Psalms were either written or sung by Asaph. One was written by Moses, the *90th Psalm.* Some were written while Judah was in captivity, others after their return. One was written for the consecration of second Temple.

Is it known what Psalm was sung at the last Paschal supper of which Jesus partook with His disciples?

According to the usage, the 113th to 118th inclusive. Let us return to the history of David; David had great faith in God, he was merciful, just, and true. He was a poet. The harp of David was full stringed, every angel of joy and sorrow swept over the chords as he passed. The great poets of the Bible, Hebrew critics say, are Job, David. Isaiah. In David's psalms are many sublime passages, but he chiefly excels in the pleasing, soft and tender. David was a great soldier, and after obtaining his kingdom he governed it wisely and well.

What is meant by the expression, that he was a man after God's own heart?

It simply means he was a great monarch and governed his kingdom by laws approved by Heaven.

Is not this an unfortunate expression (*see Chron. 11th chap.*) of the historian?

Yes. Though David's kingly government may

have been perfect, his self-government did not always correspond. The tone of his life, penitent and pious as he was, seems to have been lowered by the polygamy of an Eastern court; yet David was a wonderful man, he was raised up by Almighty God to carry out His wise and righteous plans. His psalms are a joy forever.

LESSON IX.

SOLOMON, THIRD KING OF ISRAEL.

Who succeeded David?

Solomon, the son of Bathsheba. The first child of this mother was removed by death as a declared punishment for David's sin. At this death, David declares his belief in the immortality of the soul: "I shall go to Him, but He will not return to me." David was a tender father, as is proved by the history of his son Absalom.—*See the history of Absalom's rebellion in the 18th chap. of 2d Samuel.*

Was not Solomon the wisest of men?

"His wisdom," says the sacred writer, "exceeded the wisdom of the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt." The reign of Solomon was made illustrious by the erection and consecration of the Temple at Jerusalem, 1000 B. C. He was 20 years of age when he ascended the throne of united Israel.

Did not Solomon have a remarkable dream at the beginning of his reign?

Yes. Solomon went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices to God. The Lord spake to him in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask what I shall give thee;" and Solomon said, "Thou hast made Thy servant king, and I am but a little child. I know not how to go out or come in, give Thy servant an understanding heart to judge Thy people, this great people that I may discern between good and bad.

Was this prayer acceptable to the Most High?

Yes. And God said, "because thou hast asked for wisdom and hast not asked for long life, or for riches, *or the life of thine enemies*, I will give thee a wise and understanding heart.

How early in his reign did Solomon begin to construct the temple?

In the fourth year of his reign. Solomon entered into a contract with Hiram, king of Tyre. Tyre agreed to furnish cedar and fir, and from Sidon came skillful workmen in wood and stone. Hiram agreed to send the building material on floats by sea, to the place that Solomon appointed.

What did Solomon pay in return?

He supplied Tyre and Sidon with wheat and oil, he also sent men to the mountains of Lebanon to labor with the Tyrian workmen in hewing the trees. Tyre was the port of Palestine, and Palestine was the granary of Tyre.

How long was the Temple in building?

It was seven and a half years in building. The Temple rose in silence without the noise of hammer or any tool.

In what chapter is the prayer of dedication?

Read the 8th chapter of kings. The dedicatory prayer is grand and beautiful, but Solomon was not only eloquent in speech, but a great writer. The inspired wisdom of David and Solomon, left to the children of God a priceless heritage in the Psalms and Proverbs.

Repeat to me Agar's prayer in the 30th chap. of Proverbs?

"Remove far from me, vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me; lest I be full and deny Thee and say, 'Who is the Lord'; or lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain."

What books did Solomon write?

He wrote the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Canticles, or Song of Solomon. It is supposed he wrote the Canticles in early life, about the time he married Pharaoh's daughter. Though Solomon wrote the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes under the inspiration of God, yet we see the experience *of the man* who feels the vanity and sin of a long life of indulgence.

Can you believe that Solomon was an idolater?

We cannot believe that a mind that conceived such sublime notions of God could ever have had any faith in idols. He allowed his heathen wives to have their way, and to indulge in idolatrous practices.

Was the worship of the Temple ever intermitted?

No; the words of Holy Writ are: "He went not fully after the Lord."

Is there not much in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes that looks like repentance?

In Proverbs he utters the most eloquent warnings against the wiles of strange women. In this book are the most striking monitions to beware of her, "whose house leads down to the chambers of death." The Proverbs of Solomon, unlike the *maxims* of other nations, are deeply imbued with a religious spirit.

How long did Solomon reign?

He reigned forty years, the same length of years as his father David. Two reigns of such continued prosperity made Israel powerful and wealthy, but alas, the weakness and wickedness of the succeeding king, Rehobaum, destroyed the union of the tribes and the unity of the nation.

We have said little of the elegant interior arrangements of the Temple.

The courts for strangers, women, men and priests, were built of huge stone, quarried at a distance, these were surrounded by cloisters with galleries of rooms for the lodging of the Priests and Levites, many hundreds in number.

Was not the main building of white marble?

Yes; and the Holy of Holies was overlaid even to the roof with plates of gold. The elegance and grandeur of Solomon's court was the boast of the Jewish people in all succeeding generations.

What does our Lord say in regard to this subject?

He points to the lilies of the field when He is enforcing the truth of God's care of His creatures

and says: "Solomon in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these."

Who was the fourth king of Israel?

Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, came to the throne at forty-one years of age; but he seems to have derived little wisdom from his illustrious father. When some of his subjects led by Jeroboam came to him to inquire about the policy he intended to pursue he replied them in a harsh way, thus losing the opportunity of conciliation. Ten of the tribes believing that he would reign as a tyrant, determined to secede and choose another king to reign over them.

Who was Jeroboam?

It appears that Jeroboam was regarded by Solomon as a man of valor and 'industrious,' he therefore promoted him to an important charge, he afterwards manifested ambition and was banished to Egypt the court of Shishak. At the death of Solomon, he, Jeroboam, returned to his country and led the ten tribes in rebellion.

Were there not two distinct kingdoms in Palestine from this period?

Yes, two distinct kingdoms; the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Rehoboam at first desired to make war on Jeroboam, but he received a message to forbear and not to fight against his brethern. He had been but three years on his throne, the dissevered kingdom of Judah and Benjamin (the two tribes that cleaved to him), when Shishak came up to Jerusalem and made war against it.

LESSON X.

REHOBOAM AND SHISHAK, KING OF EGYPT.

We read in the 12th chapter of 11 Chronicles, that Shishak came up against Jerusalem, and that he took treasures from the house of the Lord and treasures from the king's house. He took away the shields of gold that Solomon had made. Rehoboam replaced them by shields of brass.

Is it not said by some of the learned, that there is a column at Thebes which contains a record of Shishak's victories in Palestine?

Yes, this is asserted, and some suppose that Shishak and Sesostris are identical, but the learned Milman supposes that his career was much earlier, he thinks that Sesostris made his conquests when the Israelites sojourned in the wilderness.

Though Rehoboam received counsel not to fight against the ten tribes, did not Abijah, his son and successor gain a great victory over the troops of Jeroboam?

Yes, he recovered some of the cities he had lost. The religious feelings of the people were with Abijah, and when the sacred trumpets sounded in Judah's army, it seemed to create much enthusiasm: and the children of Israel fled before Judah. It is believed that there is an error in the numerals that state the numbers engaged on both sides.—*See 2d Chron. 13th chapter.*

Did not the tribe of Levi go to Jerusalem to conduct the services of the Temple?

Undoubtedly; also many who loved to worship in

the Temple, constantly resorted to Jerusalem. Jeroboam wishing to check the visits of the people to Jerusalem, (except at stated times,) erected calves of gold, supposed to be a sort of imitation of the Cherubim, at Dan and Bethel and made himself a priest.

Did not Asa, the successor of Abijah in Judah, work many reforms?

He took away all the images and opposed every species of idolatry. Baasha, king of Israel, contemporary with Asa, king of Judah, seeing that many of his subjects went up to Jerusalem to reside, determined to build a fortress at Ramah to prevent emigration.

Was there not confusion in the succession of the kings of Israel, after the death of Jeroboam?

The race of Jeroboam had no worthy descendants, adventurers seized upon the throne. Baasha destroyed the lineage of Jeroboam, took possession of the throne of the ten tribes, and occupied it 24 years.

Were not Baasha's posterity destroyed in like manner?

While Elah, son of Baasha, was drinking himself drunk in his palace, Zimri, his captain, conspired against him and killed him in the 27th year of Asa, king of Judah, but Zimri reigned only seven days. When Zimri heard that the people had chosen Omri to be king and were besieging his city Tirzah, like a second Sardanapulous, he went into the palace, set fire to it and perished.

Was not Omri distinguished as the builder of the city Samaria?

Yes; Omri called the city Samaria from Shemer the former owner of the hill. Omri was the father of Ahab. Asa was still king of Judah when Ahab became king of Israel.

Whom did Ahab marry?

He married Jezebel, the daughter of the king of Sidon. In this marriage the wickedness of Israel seemed to culminate. Ahab erected an altar to Baal in his city Samaria. This city became from this time a rival to Jerusalem, 915 B. C.

Did not the prophet Elijah live at this time?

Yes. Elijah was a prophet in Israel, while Ahab and Jezebel ruled in its capital, Samaria. A famine prevailed at this time.—*See the XVI chap. of* 1 *Kings, for the history of the widow of Sarepta, also* 18*th Kings for the trial of Baal.* The trial of the merits of Baal was brought before the multitude. Elijah cried out to them, "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him, but if Baal, follow him." Meanwhile Elijah had re-erected an altar to God that had been thrown down by the priests of Baal. When the appointed offering was laid on the altar by Elijah, it was accepted by fire. The people seeing this cried out: "The Lord, He is God, the Lord, He is God." The priests of Baal were then put to death and their altars overthrown.—*18th Chapter of Kings.*

Are there not some incidents in the histories of Elijah and Elisha hard to be understood?

Yes; but dreadful crimes require summary punish-

ment. Idolatry, cruelty, and licentiousness filled the land. A miracle seems to have been necessary to restore the faith of the people. The elements of nature are in God's hands.

Are we not told in the 148th Psalm, that fire and hail, snow and vapor, and stormy winds fulfill his word?

Yes. Elijah became at one time so thoroughly discouraged by the wickedness of Jezebel the queen, and the weakness of Ahab her husband, that he fled from Samaria. He supposed, until the spirit of God in a dream assured him to the contrary, that he was the only true worshipper of God in the kingdom of Israel.

How was the prophet informed?—*19 chap. of 1 Kings.*

It was a most remarkable occasion, "the prophet stood on Horeb's 'rock', and behold the Lord passed by, a strong wind rent the mountains, but the Lord was not in the wind, and then an earthquake and a fire, and after the fire a *still small voice* which said: 'What doest thou here Elijah?' Then Elijah expresses his despair; but God said: 'I have left me seven thousand in Israel who have not bent the knee to Baal.'" Ahab afterwards humbled himself before God, but Jezebel died in her sins.—*Read 1 Kings XXI.*

Does not Elijah's mistake with regard to the extent of idolatry prove that the prophetical vision was limited?

Undoubtedly. Prophets could only foreknow what God revealed to them. If their vision had been perfect they would have been Gods.

How do you define the difference between revelation and inspiration?

A distinction between inspiration and revelation has been thus defined: "St. John's account of the crucifixion of our Lord was inspired, not revealed—he wrote what he saw. The Apocalypse was both revealed and inspired, because he wrote what he saw in a vision.

Does it not appear that Elijah was translated to Heaven?

He was miraculously taken up from the presence of Elisha, and from some of the sons of the prophets. Elisha saw in vision a chariot of fire and horses of fire. These sons of the prophets were young men trained in a knowledge of theology.

Did not these young men beg Elisha to send fifty strong men to search for the body of Elijah?

Yes. Perhaps these young men did not have the vision that was vouchsafed to Elisha. It will be remembered that on one occasion when the servant of Elisha accompanied him, that the servant was much alarmed when he saw a Syrian host advancing to battle. Elisha said to the servant, "They that be with us are more than they who are against us. Lord, I pray thee, open the eyes of this young man, that he may see;" and he saw the mountain full of horses and chariots around about Elijah.—*6th Chapter 2d Kings.*

Did not Elijah work miracles?

He increased the oil of the poor widow when her sons were claimed as bondsmen. The prophet

directed her to sell the oil and pay the debt. He restored the son of the woman who kept a room for his entertainment.—*See 2d Kings, 4th Chapter.*

LESSON XI.

FROM JEROBOAM, THE USURPER, TO HORHEA.

Is not the beautiful narrative of Naaman contained in the 5th chapter of 2d Kings?

Yes. Naaman, a captain in the army of the King of Syria, in some of the wars that his master had waged against the Kingdom of the Ten Tribes, had taken captive a little maid, and she waited on Naaman's wife, a captive Israelite in the Kingdom of Syria.

Did not this maid seek through her mistress to give instruction to Naaman?

Yes. Naaman was a great man with his master, but he was a Leper. This little girl suggested that if her master would inquire of the Prophet of God, in Samaria, he would heal him. The captain went down in great pomp, first to the king, then to the prophet, Elisha. Naaman is disgusted with the simple remedy prescribed. "Are not Arbana and Pharphar," he cries, "rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?" (How much prejudice in every age has arisen in opposition to the simple rite of baptism.)

How many kings of Israel were there from Jeroboam to Hoshea, the last king of Samaria?

There were, you must remember, four kings of united Israel (Saul, David, Solomon, Rehoboam)

and nineteen kings of Samaria. The most famous kings of Samaria were Ahab and Jehu. The most wicked queens were Jezebel and Athaliah, both Sidonians.

Was not Ahab slain in battle?

Yes; he entered into a league with Jehosaphat, king of Judah, to take Ramoth Gilead from the king of Syria. Ahab entered the army in disguise, but one drew a bow at a venture and pierced his heart.

Did not Jehu exterminate the family of Ahab?

Jehu was used as an instrument by the Almighty to destroy a generation of wicked idolaters. "Jehu destroyed the worship of Baal in Israel, but Jehu took no heed to walk in the laws of the Lord, his God," but as he destroyed the worship of Baal in Israel in cutting off the posterity of Ahab, *his* children sat on the throne of Israel until the fourth generation.

Who was Athaliah?

She was the wicked daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. She married Jehoram, King of Judah. She had one son, Ahaziah, to whom she gave the most wicked counsel. The reign of her son was short, as he was slain by Jehu. When her son was dead Athaliah took means to destroy, as she thought, all the "seed royal," but the wife of the High Priest, Jehoiada, preserved one of the sons of the king (Joash) and concealed him six years, until he was old enough to be presented to the people as their king.—*Read 11th Chapter of 2d Kings.*

What was the fate of Athaliah?

She had meanwhile made herself Queen of Jerusalem, trampling upon the true religion and upholding idolatry with a tyrannical power. On the day that Jehoida, the priest, presented the young Joash in the temple, Athaliah, seeing an assembled crowd and ignorant of the cause, hastened thither. When she saw the coronation she screamed, "Treason! Treason!" She was seized by the excited mob and slain.

Has not this story of Athaliah been made the subject of a drama?

Yes; Racine, a French poet, took this tragic story as the plot of a celebrated play, '*Athalie.*'

Was Joash a blessing to his country?

For a long time he reigned well and wisely, especially during the lifetime of Jehoiada. Joash repaired the temple of the Lord and called the Priests and Levites together to attend to the ministration of the sanctuary. A chest was placed at the entrance of the temple to receive the money of the people as they came in, who wished to make offerings to the treasury of the Lord's house.

Did not Joash commit a great sin in his later days?

Yes; he seemed to forget the great debt of gratitude he owed to his patron, Jehoiada, when he permitted some of the princes of Judah to stone to death Zechariah, the son of his early friend.

How had Zechariah offended them?

He reproached the king and his proud associates

for their sins. But the judgment of God was executed against Joash, and also against the princes "for the blood of the sons of Jehorida, the Priest.

Who was the successor of Joash?

Amariah. He seems to have been a man of ability; he strengthened the fortresses, and prepared a great army to meet his enemies, but he was not successful.

What of Uzziah?

He was the grandson of Joash. Uzziah, or Uzariah, as he is called in *Kings*, was a great man, he reigned 52 years. He became elated by prosperity and presumed to act as a Priest, burning incense at the altar. He was punished with leprosy and *lived* in a separate house. The great prophet, Isaiah, began to teach in the days of Uzziah, about 750, B. C.

Were not the kings of Assyria very troublesome at this time both to the kingdoms of Israel and Judah?

Yes; Pul, the king of Nineveh, rendered Israel tributary and threatened its overthrow by his power; but the utter ruin of the kingdom of Samaria, or Israel, was delayed until the reign of *Hoshea*, the *last king* of the kingdom of Israel.

What king of Assyria took them away and brought to naught the kingdom of the Ten Tribes?

Shalmaneser, the King of Nineveh, which city was then the capital of the Assyrian Empire. Shalmaneser led away their king, Hoshea, and the bulk of the nation to Media, and settled them in its cities.

The days of Nineveh, too, were numbered, for about three years after the carrying away of the Israelites her pride was humbled by Arbuces, of Media, and Belesis, Governor of Babylon.

Was not Sennacherib a king of Nineveh?

Yes; he was the son of Shalamaneser, and he it was who surrounded Jerusalem, with his army in the reign of Hezekiah.

Who was king of Judah when Samaria was taken?

Ahaz, one of the most unscrupulous of her kings. He had made his kingdom tributary to Tiglath Pileser, the father of Shalmaneser. Judah was saved at this time and her national life prolonged, by the accession of Hezekiah; this noble king came to the throne of Jerusalem six years after the fall of Samaria.

What is known of the kingdom of Ephriam or Israel after they were taken to Media? (Sometimes called Ephraim, because it was the most powerful of the Ten.)

They never appear again in history as an independent nation. It is usually supposed that they were absorbed among other nations. We think that some of them afterward mingled with their brethren of Judah, then they returned after their captivity. It is possible that there were a few persons representing all the tribes after the rebuilding of the second temple. We read in the infancy of our Lord, of Anna, who belonged to the tribe of Aser.

What of the poets and prophets of Judah when their people were so surrounded by enemies from Egypt and Assyria?

The voices of the prophets became loud and distinct in their presages of evil.

LESSON XII.

SENNACHERIB.

The prophets, Jonah and Nahum, predict the downfall of Nineveh. Isaiah speaks in clear, prophetic tones of the ruin of Babylon; but before its ruin he speaks plainly of the conquest of Cyrus, the end of the Babylonian captivity, and the coming of the Messiah.

Is not the 43d chapter of Isaiah full of prophetical incidents in the life of our Lord?

In that chapter it is said that "He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by his stripes we are healed.

Is it not also said that he made intercession for the transgressors, that he made his grave with the wicked and with rich in his death?

Yes. Two members of the Sanhedrim, one of them the rich Joseph, went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus—He was crucified between two thieves, one of whom repented and cried, "Lord, remember me."

Did not Sennacherib, son of Shalmaneser, surround Jerusalem in the days of Hezekiah?

Yes, that king surrounded Jerusalem with his army. "The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold, but God smote the host with the breath of pesti-

lence." Then Hezekiah was very energetic in reforming abuses, he had wrought a thorough reformation with the help of a prophet like Isaiah, both in Church and State.

Where is Hezekiah's eloquent prayer recorded?

In the 19th Chapter of 2d Kings, also in the 37th Chapter of Isaiah.

Was not the army of Sennacherib dispersed in one night?

The destruction of this army, or a large part of it, is supposed to have been produced by a simoom, or a hot pestilential wind of the desert. Sennacherib came from Egypt to Jerusalem. Herodotus relates a strange story of the cause of the sudden flight of the army of Sennacherib from Egypt. He says a large number of field mice gnawed the quivers, bow strings and shield straps of the Assyrians. This compelled them to raise the siege.

After this deliverance from enemies, was not Hezekiah afflicted with sickness?

We read of this sickness in the 37th and 38th chapters of Isaiah. His life was prolonged fifteen years. "Undertake for me, I am oppressed," was one of his petitions. How many children of God, since his time, have used these words!

Did not this king of Judah, before the ten tribes were carried away, send to invite the people of Samaria to come up to Jerusalem, to keep with him and his people the Passover feast?

Messengers were sent to all the tribes with urgent requests to unite with them. Ephraim refused, but some of the lesser tribes came up to Jerusalem.

Was not the Temple service enlarged in the days of Hezekiah?

Some additional Psalms that had been collected, were written down and applied to the Temple service. The glorious prophecies of Isaiah and Micah were uttered during this reign. Hosea, Amos, and Jonah prophesied before this time.

Is not the story of Jonah wonderful?

Yes, his history contains a remarkable miracle, but whether symbolic or real, we must as Christians accept it as "Holy Writ," as our Lord quotes it in Matthew 12 : 40, as a type of His resurrection. The story of Jonah, except the miracle, is very naturally told. He knows that his duty is to go to Nineveh, yet he embarks at Joppa to go to Tarshish. He tells the shipmaster that "he is a Hebrew, and that he fears the God of Heaven who hath made the sea and the dry land."

In speaking of the enlargement of the Temple service, during the reign of Hezekiah, you mention additional Psalms, did David write all the Psalms?

No. He is called the Psalmist of Israel, because he founded the Psalter. He wrote a large number and many of them the most beautiful. Solomon probably wrote some. Moses wrote the 90th Psalm, which has been a funeral dirge for civilized nations from that time to the present.

Was not music and poetry cultivated by the Hebrews from very early times?

Yes. See in the 1st Samuel, 10th chap., 7th v., a company of scholars are represented as using

Psalter, Tabret and Harp. In the days of king David, music and poetry were carried to the greatest height.

Was not the 24th Psalm composed when the ark of the covenant was brought to Mt. Zion?

Yes. To the Jew and to the Christian, these songs of Zion have been refreshing fountains all down the ages, reflecting in their clear waters the high and holy attributes of Jehovah.

Are there not some deprecatory Psalms?

Yes, it must be acknowledged that in these wells of salvation there are some bitter waters. The 41st, 55th, 69th and 109th contain imprecations. Some interpreters believe the future tense ought to be used instead of the imperative mood.

Is not the 109th Psalm painful to read in our public service, as it seems so opposed to the divine law of love?

Yes, as it is rendered. Some persons connect this psalm with the treason of Ahithophel against David.—*2d Samuel* 15, 31. The expressions do appear to be a burst of indignant denunciation, against some wicked, dastardly offender. The grandeur of the psalms, (excepting the imprecations,) is beyond all praise.

Who was the successor of Hezekiah?

Manasseh, an unfortunate, wicked king. He was taken to Babylon by an Assyrian captain. Upon his promise to pay tribute, and declaring repentance for his evil deeds, he was restored to his capital.

By whom was Nineveh destroyed?

By Nabopolassar, governor of Babylon, and Cyaxares, governor of Media, 612 B. C. Babylon then became the great capital of that region until it was conquered by Cyrus, who (in connecction with Cyaxares, his uncle, called Darius in the Bible,) made it (Babylon) the capital of the Medo-Persian Empire, 560 B. C.

Did not the ruin of Jerusalem draw near?

Yes. The immediate successor of Manasseh was murdered, but the accession of the good Joriah delayed for a time the impending ruin of Jerusalem.

LESSON XIII.

Josiah, the grandson of Hezekiah, was a wise and pious prince. He did more to extirpate idolatry than any who came before him.

Was there not found in the temple at this time an original copy of the Law of Moses?

Stanley seems to think that the *roll* then found was the book of Deuteronomy. It seems to have been cast aside and forgotten. When Hilkiah, the Priest, read it in the presence of the king and to all the people, Josiah was struck with terror at the awful threatening denounced upon his people and country. The king caused many copies to be made of the Book of the Law.

Was not Josiah animated with the hope of reuniting Palestine?

Yes; he had recently, with the assistance of the King of Assyria, extended sovereignty over Samaria,

and he discovered that, although the bulk of the nation had been carried away by Shalmanesea, yet, notwithstanding the heathen colonists sent up by Esarhaddon, the predominant population of that land were descendants of the Ten Tribes

Did not the service rendered to Josiah by Assyria cost Josiah his life?

Yes; when Josiah heard that Pharaoh Necho was demanding a passage through his country to attack Carchemish, a frontier city on the Euphrates, he buckled on his armor and met Necho in battle. To the great grief of his people he was slain at Megiddo, 611, B. C.

How many Kings of Jerusalem after Josiah?

Those that reigned after Josiah were mere shadows of royalty. Necho conquered Carchemish and then placed upon the throne Jehoahaz, the son of the lamented Josiah, but he was dethroned in a few months, and Jehoiakim succeeded. Then Jehoiachin was put upon the throne.

Did not the great prophet, Jeremiah, prophesy in the reigns of the last Kings of Judah?

Yes; meanwhile the greatest of the Kings of Assyria, Nebuchadnezzar, appeared at the gates of Jerusalem. He took Jehoiachin from the throne and sent him with his family, much treasure and money of the nobility, to Babylon, placing Zedekiah, a son of Josiah, upon the shattered throne of Jerusalem. He reigned eleven years.

Did not the prophet, Jeremiah, counsel submission to the Kings of Babylon?

After making much effort for reform he counseled them to pay tribute and submit to their fate, but the last three Kings of Judah were deaf to his prayers and remonstrances.

Was not Zedekiah repeatedly warned of the madness of his course?

Yes. He treated with contempt all the messages he received from the prophet; the women of Israel, too, despised his reproofs and continued to burn incense to an idol whom they called the Queen of Heaven. Meanwhile Zedekiah rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, who had put him on the throne.

Did not this King of Babylon besiege the city in the ninth year of Zedekiah?

Yes; he continued the siege until the eleventh year, a famine became sore, Jerusalem was broken up.

CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH.

Did not Zedekiah flee with his men of war?

Yes, the Chaldeans pursued them and overtook them. The sons of the king were slain before his eyes. The eyes of Zedekiah were put out, so that the prophesy of Ezekiel was literally fulfilled—"He will not see Babylon, but he will die there."

By whom was the Temple of Solomon destroyed?

By Nebuzaradan, chief general of the King of Babylon. He burned the house of the Lord, the palace of the king, and all the houses of the great men in Jerusalem. He carried down many captives,

he left chiefly the laboring poor in the land to be husbandmen and winedressers. Thus was Judah carried into captivity.

Had not the Kings of Judah received many warnings of the desolation that awaited them?

When the weak and wicked Jehoiakim was king it was revealed to Jeremiah that he should take a *roll* and write upon it all the words that the spirit of God had dictated to him from the time of Josiah until now. As Jeremiah was shut up in prison he sent for Baruch and gave to him the roll containing the message.

What did Baruch then do?

He went to the house of the Lord and read the *roll* in the ears of the assembled people. It was a day of fasting. Some of the princes then sent for Baruch and said, "Tell us, how didst thou receive this roll?" And Baruch said, "The prophet pronounced these words to me and I wrote them with ink in a book."

Did Jehoiakim then see the roll?

Yes; Jehoiada one of their wise men, took the roll to the king, and when he, Jehoiakim, had read three or four leaves of it, (*see 36th chapter of Jeremiah,*) he took his penknife and cut the leaves from the roll, and put them into the fire that burned upon the heath before him. Some of his attendants interceded to save it, but in vain.

Was not a second roll sent to him?

Yes; but he gave no heed, many words were added to this second message.

Why did Zedekiah rebel, when the king of Babylon had treated him so generously?

Because he relied on the intervention of the king of Egypt. Pharaoh Hoprah, actually came up against Nebuchadnezzar, but he had a grievous defeat. Zedekiah remembered too late the earnest entreaties of Jeremiah to submit to Assyria, also his prophecies against Pharaoh Hoprah, king of Egypt.

What was the fate of Jeremiah when the city was taken?

The prophet had been thrust into prison by some of the nobles; through the good offices of Ebed-melech, an Ethiopian, who interceded with the king in behalf of Jeremiah, he was taken out of the noisome prison, and set at liberty. We have already spoken of Jeremiah's exhortations to Zedekiah to submit to the king of Babylon and their entire failure. He sent word to the captives, that the time of their captivity in Babylon would be long,—even seventy years.

Did not the prophet Jeremiah, go down to Babylon?

No; Zebuzaradan treated Jeremiah with courtesy, he was permitted to act as he pleased.

LESSON XIV.

Zebuzaradan, the general of Nebuchadnezzar, had appointed a governor Gedaliah, for the protection of the people.

Was not Gedaliah murdered?

Yes; some of the people in their madness put this

man to death, who would have been a friend to them. The wretched murderers then fled to Egypt and compelled the prophet Jeremiah to go with them. He died in Egypt, but lived long enough to see his darkest predictions fulfilled.

Does he not portray in the book called the "Lamentations," with deep and tragic pathos, the truth of history?

"How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people! She that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary!" Ezekiel and Daniel had been taken down, when quite young, to Babylon with Jehoiakim or perhaps earlier, but Jeremiah was left to see the ruin of his city, and to bewail in elegiac strains, the desolation he could not avert or stay.

How many different transportations were there of captives from Judah?

There were four; the first under Jehoiakim when Daniel and his companions were among the captives, A. M. 3398, the second in the seventh year of Jehoiakim, the third in the reign of Jehoiachin, the fourth, or seventy years of captivity, was under Zedekiah.

Was not Daniel (*see Daniel*) an important officer in Babylon?

He was prime minister to more than one eastern monarch. Daniel with three noble youths, were subjected (in their youth,) to terrible persecution, for refusing to bow down to the image of Nebuchadnezzar, erected in the plains of Dura. The heroism and constancy of Daniel, to his faith and duty, were

probably the cause of his promotion, even by a heathen king.

How did Jeremiah show his faith in the *return* of his people, after their long capivity?

He purchased a field of his nephew near his native Anathoth, and gave the title deeds to Baruch for preservation.

Was not Belshazzar the last of the Babylonian kings?

Belshazzar was slain on the night that Cyrus, king of Persia, entered the city with his hosts. Cyrus reigned over Babylon in conjunction with Cyaxares the Mede, he is called Darius the Mede in the Bible. Before the entrance of the Persians, Daniel had interpreted "the handwriting on the wall," to mean that the Chaldean city would be given to the Medes and Persians.

What did Cyrus do for the *strange people* whom he found in the midst of Babylon?

Cyrus published an edict (*Ezra 6th chap. 3d verse,*) permitting the Jews to return to their own land, and furnished them with facilities for their journey, and authority to rebuild their temple.

Who was their leader in the first expedition to Jerusalem?

Zerubbabel.—1 *Chron.* 3, 19. Under his guidance a prince of the house of David, 42,000,300 men went up to their sacred city. Many servants and maids, and singing men and singing women accompanied them. A large number of the Jews still remained in Babylonia. There was a large settlement of the children of Judah on the river Chebar, not far

from Babylon. Four of the twenty-four courses of priests went up to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel.

Is it not supposed that the decree that Cyrus issued, was through the influence of Daniel, the prime minister of Darius, the uncle of Cyrus?

This is very probable. It had been prophesied by Isaiah a long time previous. The framing of the edict is attributed to Daniel, in which he declares the unity of God. The national spirit doubtless was still warm in the heart of Daniel.

Does not Isaiah's declaration, (*see Isaiah*) "I form the light and create darkness," seem to refer to the Persian creed?

Though the Persians were regarded as Monotheists they regarded light the symbol of God, rather as a creator than a creation. In later times the Monotheism of the Persians degenerated into Dualism.

Was not Zerrubbabel clothed with kingly power?

The learned say that he was made Sheshbazzar or Pasha. On their arrival in their native land, many of the common people joined them. It is probable that some of the representatives of the ten tribes mingled with them.

Was not the second Temple soon begun?

The first object of the returned captives was to restore the worship of God, they set up an altar and laid the stones of the foundation the second day of the second year.

Did not their neighbors, the Samaritans, interfere with the building of the Temple and city?

Yes; they first proposed to the Jews to let them

take part in the building as they wished to worship there also. The Jews indignantly refused their participation, telling them they were not of Israel but were Cutheans.

Who were the Samaritans?

They were a mixed race, partly descended from the Cuthean colonists sent up by Esarhaddon, (*Ezra* 4, *2d.*) and partly from the original ten tribes or Israelites. Priests of Israel had been sent up among them to teach them the religion of the country.—*See 2d Kings* 17. It is probable therefore, that the Samaritans really did retain some love and knowledge of their old religion, though nearly two centuries had elapsed since the conquest of Shalmaneser.

What revenge did the Samaritans take on the Jews, for their refusal to permit them to unite in their worship?

Some active Samaritans sent a deputation to Cambyses, son of Cyrus, asking him to issue an order to the Jews to desist in building their city and temple, stating that the "bad, rebellious city" ought not to be rebuilt.

Did Cambyses listen to the suggestions of the Samaritans?

The work was seriously retarded from some cause; on the accession of Darius Hystuspes, the work was renewed and brought to a successful termination. In the sixth year of the reign of Darius, the second temple built on the old foundations was completed.

How did it compare with the first Temple built by Solomon?

The old men wept when they thought of the

superior magnificence of the first House, but the young men rejoiced. However, all the children of the captivity kept the dedication with joy.

LESSON XV.

What Psalms were sung at the dedication of the second temple?

It is thought that the last five Psalms were written for that occasion. Though the riches of the people were at this time much lessened, they possessed treasures of poetry. Haggai and Zechariah were with them. They prophesied in poetic numbers. Haggai declared that the glory of the *latter* house would be greater than the glory of the former house. This was fulfilled when the Lord Jesus entered the temple.

Did not the Jews incur a great danger in the reign of a Persian king, called in the Bible, Ahasuerus, (Xerxes)?

Yes. Large numbers of Jews *still* lived in Babylon, and in one of its capitals, Susa. In the book of Esther we are told that a minister named Haman had obtained a decree that the Jews should be massacred on a certain day. The hatred of Haman to the Jews had been engendered by jealousy of a certain Jew of prominence named Mordecai, he sat at the king's gate, but he refused to *bow* to Haman.

How was this massacre prevented?

Mordecai, the Jew, was the uncle of Queen Esther (though Ahasuerus was not aware that his Queen was of the Jewish race). So soon as Morde-

cai heard of the decree he sent for Esther, and he told her that she must save her people.

What was her reply?

She told him of the difficulties in her way, but said to him, "I will fast and pray with my maidens, I will then go in to the king, which is not according to the law, but if I perish, I perish." With this noble resolve she presented her petition. Mordecai tells Esther that God is not straitened for *means*, if she declines to help her people that deliverence will come from some other source. Esther succeeded entirely with her suit. It was recollected, too, by the king that Mordecai, the Jew, had saved the king's life by exposing a conspiracy.

Could the laws of the Medes and Persians be changed or repealed?

No; but the Jews were saved by apprising them through all the country of their danger, and they put themselves in a state of defense, and so were saved.

Was the reign of Artaxerxes favorable to the Jews?

Yes; in his reign another migration takes place. Ezra, a man of priestly descent, led this migration. (*See Ezra, 7th Chapter, 6th verse.*) In the seventh year of Artaxerxes, Ezra set out from Suriana and was joined by a reinforcement of 38 Levites from a Jewish settlement in that neighborhood, with full power from kingly authority to collect treasure for the adornment and completion of the temple.

Did not many of the Priests of the higher order and some of a lower, together with Nethinims accompany Ezra?

Yes; many priests went with him. The Nethinims were a remnant of the Gibeonites. They had been carried into captivity with Judah.

Did not Ezra find on his return to Jerusalem that some of his countrymen had constructed unlawful marriages?

Yes. Ezra used his authority in annulling these marriages. He sent the wives back to their former homes so soon as suitable provision could be made. "Thus was an iron line of separation drawn" that separated the Jews from the rest of the world.

Was not Jerusalem unfortified and defenseless for a time after the temple was built?

Until the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the holy city was *open* and defenseless. At this time the Persians determined to make Jerusalem a military post. This important matter was entrusted to Nehemiah, a cup-bearer of Artaxerxes, and he proved afterward to be an officer of much ability.

How is Nehemiah's embassy mentioned in the Bible?

In the 2d chapter of the book of Nehemiah an interesting conversation ensues between the cup-bearer and the king, in which he requests the king to send him to Judah that he may build the wall and the gates of Jerusalem, "the place of my fathers' sepulchres lieth waste." During his interview with the king he was lifting up his heart to the God of Heaven in prayer. His prayer was heard, the king granted all his desire. For political reasons, historians say, that it became important for Persia to make Jerusalem a strong frontier town.

Did not Nehemiah encounter many difficulties in his work?

Yes; their enemies, led by Sanballat and Tobias, tried to hinder their work. Nehemiah and his men worked with the sword girt to their sides, while a part of the garrison worked, the others were prepared to fight. With armed men beside them, "they worked from the dawn until the stars appeared."

Did not their diligence and bravery succeed?

In fifty-two days the city was girt with strong walls and towers. Nehemiah *required* the rich to take a solemn oath that they would not exact usury or *interest* from their poorer brethren. The Persian tribute during their wars with the Greeks had pressed heavily on the poorer Jews and had induced them to borrow from their richer brethren Nehemiah shook his lap with this imprecation: "So God shake all from his house, who perform not this promise." All the congregation praised the Lord and said, "Amen!"

Have not some modern writers tried to make it appear that Ezra was not only a collector of the sacred books, but an originator?

Yes; some have adopted the absurd theory that Ezra had borrowed monotheistic views from the Persians. These absurd theorists, say that Ezra wrote the first chapters of Genesis, and not Moses.

Has not this theory been shattered by the deciphering of the cuneiform letters on the old stones of Chaldea?.

Yes; the Chaldaic narrative, says Le Normant, has more affinity with the *Bible* narrative than any other.

What was the work of Ezra?

He was employed in the momentous task of collecting and arranging the sacred books of the Old Testament.

What was the arrangement of Ezra?

He arranged them in three great divisions. The *law* contained in the Pentateuch, the historical books and the prophetical books—the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Job and Daniel. There are sixteen books of the prophets in the Old Testament—four prophets the greater and twelve prophets the less.

When were the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther and Malachi added?

It is thought that they were added at a later time by Simon, the Just. These closed the sacred canon.

Was not Ezra a preacher in the modern sense?

We are told in Nehemiah that Ezra stood upon a pulpit of wood, he opened the book before all the people. He and the Levites caused the people to understand the law; *they gave the sense.* Some of the children of the captivity had probably forgotten the Hebrew language. A part of the book of Ezra is written in Chaldee.

LESSON XVI.

The Jews after their long residence in Babylonia, spoke the Syro-Chaldaic or Aramaic tongue. Hebrew was still the language of the books, but *Greek* soon became the language of commerce, of the Jewish people, and of literature, after the conquest of Alexander.

Was not the New Testament written in Greek?

Certainly. But this was more than three centuries after the Greek conquest of Palestine. A version of the New Testament in Syriac, was extant in the apostolic age.

When did Nehemiah die?

About 415 B. C. History has little to say of Palestine from this period until the time of Alexander the Great. The people of Jerusalem seem to have dwelt in seclusion and peace for more than a century.

The Scriptures that Ezra had collected were put under the care of scribes, who were scrupulously anxious to preserve every text, and point, and mark.

Did not Alexander invade Jerusalem?

He certainly offered no violence to the city. An interesting story is connected with an interview said to have been held at the entrance of the holy city, between the High Priest and Alexander. The Priest is clad in his beautiful robes, followed by Priests and Levites. Alexander is filled with awe at the majestic appearance of the High Priest. He turns to him in an adoring posture. The officers of the monarch are full of wonder. He tells them that this vision appeared to him in Macedon. It is also stated that Alexander went into the Temple and read the prophecies of Daniel, which were pointed out. He released the Jews from tribute during the sabbatical year.

Did not the Alexandrian Jews have the Hebrew Bible, translated into the Greek language?

Under the patronage of Ptolemy Philadelphus, one of the successors of Alexander, on the throne of Egypt, Ptolemy Philadelphus had the Hebrew Scriptures translated into Greek. The Jews say this version was made by 72 elders, about 285 B. C. It is called the Septuagint from the tradition of the 70 elders.

Were not Palestine and Syria governed by the kings of Egypt after the death of Alexander?

A partition of his dominions was made after the battle of Ipsus, Syria was for a time governed by the Ptolemies, but in 197 B. C. the descendants of Seleucus called the Seleucidæ, got possession of the land of the Jews, these were Syrian-Greek kings. Some of these kings were great tyrants.

Did not the Greeks, both of Egypt and Syria, try to Hellenize their subjects?

They endeavored to make the Jews adopt Grecian customs and manners. One of the degraded kings of Syria tried to make the Jews assume a Greek badge, the ivy leaf, sacred to Bacchus. It was to be marked on their flesh, probably as a satire upon their covenant rite circumcision. Few of the Jews accepted it, though threatened with death or slavery.

Was it not providential that the Greeks threaten the Jews in this manner?

The contumely with which they were treated made them to cling more closely, to the religion of their fathers.

What were the prophecies of Daniel, to which you alluded.

when you said the High Priest showed them to the Macedonian conqueror?

In the 7th chapter of Daniel, (the first 12 chapters of Daniel are written in Hebrew,) we are told that Daniel, in a vision, saw four beasts rise out of the sea. The first was like a lion and had eagle's wings, these wings were plucked. This beast represented the Assyrian empire. The second beast, the Medo-Persian empire, was like a bear with three ribs in its mouth. The third beast was like a leopard with four wings, it had also four heads. The fourth beast was strong exceedingly, with iron teeth and diverse from all the others.

Were not these four beasts that Daniel saw, supposed to represent the four great empires of the earth?

Yes; but in the 8th chapter the prophecies become more explicit. The ram with two horns is explained to Daniel, as the king of Media and Persia. Then the he-goat is described as the king of Grecia, when the great horn is broken four notable ones take its place.

Were not the Jews the subjects of these empires at different times?

Yes; we have seen them in Babylon seventy years, more as colonists than captives, afterwards the tributary but protected subjects of the Medo-Persian empire, then the oppressed subjects of the successors of Alexander. In the XI chapter of Daniel, it is supposed that the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes are prophesied.

How did deliverance come from the terrible tyrannies of the Syro-Greek kings?

Not by miraculous assistance (says a learned historian of the Jews,) did Divine Providence interpose, but by the instrumentality of *human virtues*, by the lofty patriotism, the daring soldiership, the self-devotion of heroic men in the cause of their country and their God. The family of the Maccabees, (in the Apocryphia, which is bound up with the canonical Scriptures in many Bibles, contains two books called Maccabees,) Mattathias, the father, and his five sons rescued their country from the tyranny of the Syrian-Greeks, and at infinite cost to themselves, for really all of them perished in battle or by violence.

Was not Judea through their valor, an independent country for almost a century?

Yes. An eloquent historian has said of Judas Maccabeus, the eldest son of Mattathias, who first unfolded the banner of the Maccabees, that "among the lofty spirits who have asserted the liberty of their native land against cruel oppression, none have surpassed the most able of the Maccabees, in accomplishing a great end with inadequate means."

Had not the father of the Maccabees received many tempting offers to yield to the royal will?

Yes; but the old man publicly proclaimed his resolution to live and die in the faith of his fathers.

What was the meaning of the word "Maccabees"?

It is derived some say from the concluding letters of a sentence in the 11th verse of the 15th chapter

of Exodus, "Who is like unto thee among the Gods, Oh Jehovah!" But the letters on his banner, from whatever source taken, were but a faint transcript of the faith in his soul. His personal faith kindled much enthusiasm in his followers.

Did not brother after brother take up the cause of religion and freedom?

Nearly all the prominent members of the Maccabean family perished on the battle field, often in the arms of victory. At length the Romans, the fourth power spoken of by Daniel, became the conquerors of the East. Judea again became the prize and victim of the strife between East and West—between Rome and Parthia.

LESSON XVII.

Who was Antigonus?

Antigonus, the last of the Asmonean family, made a desperate though ineffectual effort to possess the throne of his fathers. He had the promise of Parthian protection, but Rome interposed. Augustus and Anthony united in conferring the crown of Judea on Herod

Did not Herod have to fight some terrible battles before he succeeded?

Yes; Jerusalem made a fierce and bitter struggle for half a year before Herod became her victor, and suffered much before she yielded the superior claims of Antigonus.

Was not Herod a great soldier?

Yes; he seems to have challenged the admiration both of Cæsar and Anthony by his military skill, yet in Judea his conduct was marked by much atrocity.

Did he not put to death the Sanhedrim, or seventy elders?

He put to death all except the *two* who advised capitulation when he besieged Jerusalem. He had a domestic enemy in his own sister, who poisoned his mind with suspicions against those of his own household.

Did he not marry Mariamne, an Asmonean princess, in order to strengthen his claims with the Jewish people?

Yes; Mariamne was a descedant of the kingly line of the Maccabees. She was greatly beloved by her people and was very beautiful. Herod was passionately devoted to her.

Did he not put her to death?

Through unfounded jealousy and suspicion he put her to death, but this act maddened him into misery and ferocity. The sons of Mariamne were charged with conspiracy and then executed. One of his last acts, when his own life was ebbing, was to put to death his son, Antipater.

Did not Herod affect much zeal for the Jewish religion?

In order to lesson the horror of the Jews for his crimes he tried to dazzle them with magnificence. The temple they so much loved, the structure of Zerubbabel, now needed repair. Herod determined to strengthen and beautify it. He added to it glit-

tering masses of white marble, and pinnacles of gold to crown the heights of Mount Moriah.

Was not this ferocious man a lover of the beautiful in art?

Yes; not only did he make the temple beautiful, but he built cities, and a palace fortress for himself. He called it Antonia.

How long did Herod begin to repair and embellish the temple before the birth of Christ?

He began the work seventeen years before the birth of our Lord. It was entirely completed in forty-six years. "See what stones and what buildings are here," said the disciples to our Lord on one occasion; they looked upon this building with pride.

How long had the second temple been standing when Herod began the repairs?

It had been built nearly 500 years. The temple of Solomon stood all together 424 years. Haggai, the prophet, said, "The glory of the latter house shall be greater than the glory of the former house," meaning that the presence of our Lord should hallow the second temple.

How many sons did Herod the Great leave?

Herod Antipas and Archelaus were the sons of one mother. Herod Philip of another. One of the sons of Mariamne left two children, Herod Agrippa and Herodias, so famous for her wicked revenge. We see from this base woman's history that the sins of the 6th and 7th commandments are nearly allied.

Who succeeded Herod on the throne of Judea?

Archelaus for a short time.

LESSON XVIII.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

In what year of Herod's reign was our Savior born?

Jesus was born in the 37th year of Herod, king of Judea, and in the 30th year of the reign of Augustus Cæsar, emperor of Rome.

Was John the Baptist older than Jesus Christ?

John, the son of Zachariah the Priest and of Elizabeth, was six months older than the son of Mary.—*See the beautiful words of Mary, Luke* 1, 46,: "My soul doth *magnify* the Lord;" this chant is called the "Magnificat".—The birth of John had also been foretold to Zachariah in the Temple by an angel.

Is there not a prophecy in Malachi of John the Baptist?

Yes; he is called a messenger of the Covenant, "he shall sit as a refiner's fire and as fuller's soap." At the circumcision of John, Zachariah uttered a song of praise, taken from the 68th Psalm.—*See Luke* 1, *verses* 68, 80.

What prophet had specially prophesied of the birth-place of Christ?

The Prophet Micah foretells the birth-place and office of Christ. "Thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth, whose *goings* forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

Was not his birth mean and lowly?

He was born in a manger or cave, but His birth

was heralded by angels in a glorious song: "Glory to God in the Highest, on earth peace, good will to men."

What d es St. Matthew say of the visit of the Magi, or wise men?

The Evangelist says: "When they were come 'into the *House*' they saw the young Child, with Mary, His mother, and they fell down and worshipped Him, presenting Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh."

How many incidents of our Lord's infancy are recorded in the Gospels?

There are four events mentioned of His infancy: The Circumcision on the eighth day; the Presentation in the Temple, of the mother and Babe for purification, (*Luke* 2, 22*d*,) on the fortieth day; the visit of the Magi, and the Flight into Egypt.

Was not the Holy Child recognized by two persons as the Messiah, in the Temple at this time?

Yes, by Simeon and Anna, of the tribe of Asher. Anna took the Child in her arms and gave thanks, and spake of Him to all who looked for redemption in Israel. Simeon uttered the song, called by the Church "*Nunc Domittis*" for eighteen hundred years. "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."

Did not the Holy Family go into Egypt at this time?

Yes, immediately after the departure of the Wise Men. The manifestation of our Lord to the Wise Men, is called the Epiphany. This festival is on the 6th of January.

Did not Joseph return to the land of Israel, at the death of Herod?

Yes; but when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither, but turned aside into Galilee.

Did not our Lord live in Nazareth from this time?

Yes, He is once spoken of as going with His parents to Jerusalem, when He was twelve years old, to keep the Passover.—*Luke* 2, 42*d to* 52*d verses*. At this early age He sat with the Doctors in the Temple, both hearing them and asking them questions. All that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.

What of Archelaus?

He, Archelaus, was deposed and banished in A.D. 12. His brothers did not obtain his dominion. It was united with Syria, and put under a Roman Procuration. Herod Antipas was made Tetrarch of Galilee, and Pontius Pilate governor of Judea.

Did not John Baptist begin his ministry by preaching, a short time before our Lord Jesus Christ?

John began to preach in the wilderness of Judea a short time before the ministry of Christ. John proclaimed himself the messenger who should come to prepare the way for the Messiah.

What was his message?

"Repent ye, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Bring forth fruits meet for repentance. I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight?'"

What does John mean, by the kingdom of heaven?

He means that the Church of Jesus Christ was about to be established; a new covenant was now offered, instead of circumcision, the sign of the old covenant, baptism would become the seal or sign.

Was Baptism a new rite?

Baptism had probably been practised among the Jews on some occasions, a priest before he entered upon his ministry was bathed with pure water, but baptism becomes, from the time of John, a distinctive rite.

Did not many Pharisees and Sadducees, the leading Jewish Sects, come to his baptism?—*Read Matthew 3d.*

Yes; many of them came to his baptism. His holy life and bold preaching attracted great crowds to the fords of Jordan, and to all he was *uncompromising* in his *requirements* and doctrine, but when *Jesus* came he said, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?"

Does not John declare that he did not know Christ when He first came?

Yes; But there was something evidently "in the *presence* and aspect of Christ that awed and captivated the soul of John."—*Farrar.* As Christ came upon the water the spirit like a dove descended upon Him, and a voice from Heaven saying, "Thou art my beloved son in whom I am well pleased."

Is not this scene at the baptism, understood as a representation of the Trinity?

Yes; There was a manifestation of three witnesses,

the voice of the Father, the visible descent of the Holy Spirit, and the presence of our Lord. The word *Trinity* is not mentioned in the New Testament, but it was at an early period adopted by the church to denote the mysterious "Three in one."

Did our Lord administer baptism?

No; Christ baptized not, but his disciples. John, the Baptist, constantly pointed to Christ as the Messiah.

What is the record of John the Baptist when the Jews sent priests and Levites to him to ask him, "Who art Thou?"

"And John said, I am not the Christ. He it is who coming after me is preferred before me." The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and he said, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world."

Why were such questions asked by the Priests and Levites of John?

Because there was a general expectation among the Jews that the Messiah was about to appear.

What did John mean by the Lamb of God?

The Jews understood that the lamb slain at their Passover was a sacrifice for sin, and that it was a type of one who should come to die for the sins of the world.

Had not Daniel foretold that when Messiah should come he would be cut off, but not for himself?

Yes; and Isaiah's prophecies were of the same

import. These things *the Jews*, *to whom* John the Baptist spoke, fully understood.

Was not this good man, John, sacrificed to the guilty revenge of a wicked woman?

Yes. The 6th chapter of St. Mark contains this terrible history from the 21st to the 29th verses. This history of Herodias, the guilty partner of Herod Antipas, shows how closely are connected the sins of the 6th and 7th commandments of the Moral Law.

Did not the leading Jews of that nation believe that when the *Messiah* came, he would be a temporal king to deliver them from the power of the Romans?

Yes, notwithstanding the many prophecies, with regard to our Lord that seem so clear and spiritual to us (after their fulfillment), the Jewish mind, with few exceptions, misunderstood His mission they refused to believe in His miracles, and were filled with rage when He declared that "His kingdom was not of this world." Two of the Sanhedrim (the great council of seventy), Joseph and Nicodemus, were attracted by His teaching and miracles.

Were not the believers in Christ greatly increased, after that Lazarus was raised from the dead?

Yes, we are told that many believed on Him, and that the Pharisees were greatly alarmed at the effect of this great miracle. "A company of Priests became obedient to the faith."

Did our Lord's own disciples fully comprehend his mission?

No, not until after His resurrection. We are told by St. Luke, that during the *forty days* 'He opened

their minds to understand the Scriptures, and explained to them what was written of Him in the Law of Moses, and in the Psalms, and in the Prophets.'

Will you not return to the beginning of our Lord's ministry, and recount the leading events ?

After His baptism He went in the Spirit to the wilderness, and fasted forty days. When He was hungered, the Devil, or Evil Spirit, approached Him with three distinct temptations. Christ repelled his attacks by words of Holy Writ, then angels ministered to Him.

Did not our Lord begin to preach as soon as John was cast into the prison?

Yes, He took up also the same theme: "Repent ye, and believe the Gospel." He went into Galilee and abode in Capernaum, and preached in the Synagogues of Galilee every Sabbath day. About this time He preached the sermon on the Mount, (*Matthew* 5, 6, 7,) embracing the eight beatitudes, the Lord's prayer, lessons on prayer and fasting, and precepts for the regulation of the whole life.

Was not the sermon on the mount preached to the multitude?

Yes. His disciples were also with Him, on this occasion. Christ, during His ministry of three years, preached everywhere, in the cities and villages, on the mountains, in the plains of Galilee, in Judea and Samaria, and in Syro-Phenicia.—*Matt.* 25, 22, *Mark 7th*, 26. His teachings and reproofs were heard in the Temple, and one of His most beautiful parables from a boat on the lake: "A sower went forth to sow."

What was the first miracle of our Lord?

His first miracle was performed at a wedding in Cana, where He turned water to wine. His attendance at Cana, consecrates the holy marriage rite.

LESSON XIX.

THE PARABLES.

Our Lord taught by parables, what are parables?

The exact definition of a parable is not easy. We explain it in saying a parable presents a picture to the mind.

Where do we find the most remarkable parables of our Lord?

In the 15th and 16th chapters of Luke we find the "Prodigal Son" and the "Rich Man and Lazarus." In the 13th chapter of Matthew we find the parable of the "Sower." This was probably the first parable spoken by the Master. What dignity surrounds the person of the divine husbandman!

Do we not find in this chapter of Matthew, the parable of the net enclosing good and bad fishes, also the merchantman seeking goodly pearls?

Yes; the parable of the "net" implies the separation that must take place in the day of retribution. The *earnestness* of the pearl diver or merchant in seeking the pearls of great price, declares the value of religion beyond all other things.

What of the parable of the good Samaritan?

This was related to the Jews (Luke 10th) to allay the prejudice of the Jews against the Samaritans.

The one grateful leper among the ten was a Samaritan, but this is not a parable, it is the recital of a fact. "The Laborers in the Vineyard," "The Unfruitful Fig Tree," "The Ten Virgins," "The Lost Sheep," "The Talents," all present significant images of daily life.

Where do we find the most vivid picture of the last judgment?

In the 25th chap. of St. Matthew. Here we see a distinct line drawn between those who will stand on the right hand of the Judge and those on the left. We hear, too, the voice of the son of man saying to those on the right hand, "Come, ye blessed," and to those on the left, "Depart, ye Cursed."

Do not Mark and Luke give a full account of the Institution of the Lord's Supper, the *new* Passover?

Yes; "This do in remembrance of me," is a positive injunction. How can we neglect a feast prepared by the King of Saints?

Does not St. John record the washing of the disciples feet, on the evening of the Passover?

Yes; there had been strife among them which should be the greatest, hence this expressive symbol is given them of humility.—*John 13.*

Did not the idea still cling to the disciples, that their Master should sit upon a throne?

This idea seems very evident from the request of Salome, the mother of James and John, for the preferment of her sons. (*See Matthew 20-21.*) Peter seems to have had clearer notions of the mission of Christ than the other disciples. Peter, James and

John were the favored witnesses of some of the most interesting incidents in our Lord's life, yet in the terrible circumstances connected with his arrest and crucifixion terror and dismay filled their hearts.

Does not our Lord shed a lustre on the domestic circle, in his visits to the family at Bethany?

His interviews and conversations with Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, are very beautitful.—*Read John, 11th chap.* Mary testified her affection for Christ in breaking the box of precious ointment and pouring it on his head a few days before his death.

After the arrest of Jesus did not Pilate send him to Herod?

Pilate, hoping to shift responsibility, sent Jesus to Herod; Herod sent him back. Pilate found *no fault in him*, but the Roman Governor was *afraid* of the Jewish hierarchy, afraid lest they should report that he was not a friend to Cæsar.

What of the traitor Judas?

Judas, full of remorse, threw down the money, went out and killed himself.—*Read Matthew, 27th chap. and Acts, 1st chap.*

Did not John, the beloved disciple, and Mary, His mother, and Mary Magdalene stand by the cross?

Yes; and to John our Saviour committed the care of his mother, and that disciple took her to his own home. For six hours our Lord hung on the cross. His death was voluntary. He laid down his life and he took it again. Jesus' agony was in a great degree *mental.* "He bore our sins in his own body on the tree."

Is not this the meaning of the mysterious cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me"?

We suppose this is the meaning of that cry. If we, sinful as we are, find it hard to bear a wounded spirit, if remorse for *one* unrepented sin fills our souls with dismay, how surpassing all human conception must his agony have been who suffered for the sins of the whole world. Is it not appalling to contemplate such suffering?

How could the Father in Heaven permit it?

Self sacrifice brings *pain* but it brings *glory* too. "We must look upon both sides of the life of Jesus." Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, for the joy that was set before him *endured* the cross, *despising* the shame, and is set down on the throne of the right hand of God.—*Hebrews* 12:2.

Did not our Lord, when on the cross, intercede for his murderers?

Yes; he said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." To the *penitent* thief at his side he said, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." "*It* is finished," is the last saying of our Lord on the cross, recorded by St. John, meaning that the work of redemption was complete.

Does not the 53d chapter of Israel, say that our Lord made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death?

Yes. He was crucified with thieves. Joseph, a rich man of Anmathea, together with Nicodemus, an honorable counselor, wrapped his body in fine linen and laid it in a new tomb.

Who was Mary Magdelene to whom Christ first appeared after his resurrection?

It is supposed that this Mary derived her name from Magdala, her native city. Others say she was the woman in the city, (*St. Luke* VII, 37, 38, 39,) who broke the alabaster box of ointment on the head of Jesus, and washed His feet with *penitent* tears. The *name* of this penitent is not mentioned. This anointing must not be confounded with the "spike-nard, very costly," that Mary of Bethany (*St. John* 11) poured upon the head of her Lord. It is certain that Mary Magdalene became a devoted follower of Jesus. He had cast out of her *seven* devils, *i. e.:* Jesus had cured her bodily malady, she *had been a lunatic*, and Christ had set her feet in the paths of virtue.

Had she not cause to watch, both at His cross and at His tomb?

Yes. Christ next appeared to Peter. Twice He met the disciples on the first day of the week. A third time on the lake shore.

Did not His ascension take place forty days afrer His resurrection?

Yes; It is recorded by Matthew, Mark and Luke that Jesus ascended to heaven in the presence of his disciples from a mountain in Galilee. He said to them, "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Go ye into all the world and teach all nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe whatsoever I have commanded you, and, lo! I am with you

alway, even unto the end of the world."—*St. Matthew* 28 *chap.*, 18, 19, 20 *vs.*

Why are Baptism and the Lord's Supper called Sacraments, when Confirmation is said to be merely a holy rite?

Because baptism and the Lord's Supper were appointed by Christ himself, "an outward sign was given as a symbol of inward spiritual grace." It is quite certain that "the laying on of hands" or confirmation was practised by the early church as a mode of confessing Christ.

What scriptural authority is there?

In the 8th chapter of the Acts we are told that Samaria had received the word of God through the preaching of Philip, the Deacon. When the *apostles* at Jerusalem heard this they sent unto them Peter and John, who *laid their hands* on the baptized believers and they received the Holy Ghost. From this incident has arisen the *custom* of confirmation in many branches of the Christian church. The apostles were required by our Lord to remain in Jerusalem until the day of Pentecost.

How long was this day after the resurrection?

Fifty days. On this pentecostal day the comforter, the Holy Ghost, was sent as the Saviour had promised.

Who were the most distinguished heralds of the Cross, in the early apostolic age?

Peter, James and John among the twelve; Stephen and Philip, of the deacons; Paul, Apollos, Mark, Barnabus, Timothy and Titus; but *Paul*, as a

preacher and *writer*, was more abundant in work than they *all*.

LESSON XX.

Were not the first converts to the Christian Church chiefly Jews?

Yes, although the Jews, as a nation, rejected Christ, yet a large proportion of the first converts to the faith of Christ, were Jews.

How many Christians were assembled in the upper room (*Acts 1, 15,*) at Jerusalem, when they met to elect an apostle in the place of Judas?

The number of the names together were about 120. "Mary, the mother of Jesus, with the women, His brethren, the apostles, and others, continued in prayer and supplication." But on the day of Pentecost, 40 days from this time, 3000 souls were added to the Church.

Did not Peter preach on this occasion, the Pentecostal day?

Yes, Peter stood up with the eleven and preached to the people with such power, that many cried out, "Men and brethern what shall we do?"

Did not Peter say, "Repent and be baptized, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost"?

Yes, many gladly received his word and were baptized. These converts seem to have been Jews from many different nations. They had come from the far east, from the west, from Egypt and from Rome, to keep the feast.

Do we not read in the 9th chapter of the Acts, of the conversion of Paul the Pharisee?

The conversion of Paul took place as he was journeying from Jerusalem to Damascus, armed with authority to persecute the Christians. His conversion took place shortly after he had witnessed the martyrdom of Stephen, a deacon of the Church. The eloquence of Paul is seen in the 22d and 26th chapters of Acts.

Who was the first remarkable Gentile convert?

Cornelius, a Roman captain, his beautiful history is told in the 10th chapter of the Acts. On the occasion of the conversion of Cornelius, St. Peter seems to realize for *the first time*, the great truth "that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that *feareth* Him, and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him."

When the Gentiles entered the Christian Church, were they required to conform to Jewish ceremonies?

No, the ceremonial law gradually passed away. We learn from the 15th chapter of Acts, that the first Christian council met at Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas were sent thither by the Church, to confer upon the question of Circumcision. The apostles and elders there assembled, declared that Circumcision for the Gentiles was unnecessary.

Did not Peter and James, both give their sentence against it?

Yes; they both spoke against the requirement. James seems to have presided in this council.

Was there any decree made with regard to the change of the Sabbath day?

No; but the obligations to keep a *seventh* part of our time as a Sabbath, is *imperative*. The observance of the first day in the week, from the period of our Lord's ressurrection, is evident from the meeting of our Lord with His disciples on several successive occasions.—*John* 20, 7. *Acts* 20.

Does not St. Paul speak of meeting together regularly on the first day of the week?

Yes, in Cor.: 16, 2. St. John also calls this day, the Lord's day.

Does not Isaiah in his 58th chapter, promise special blessings to those who turn away from their *own* pleasure on this holy day?

Yes; unspeakable blessings rest upon those who honor God's Sabbath, in every age and in every nation. The rites of sacrifice and circumcision, have vanished away, but *the name and duties* of the Sabbath, enshrined as it is in the Moral Code, must forever remain.

What special promise has Christ given to His Church?

"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."—*Matt.* 18. "Lo! I am with you alway, even to the end of the world."—*Matt.* 28, 20.

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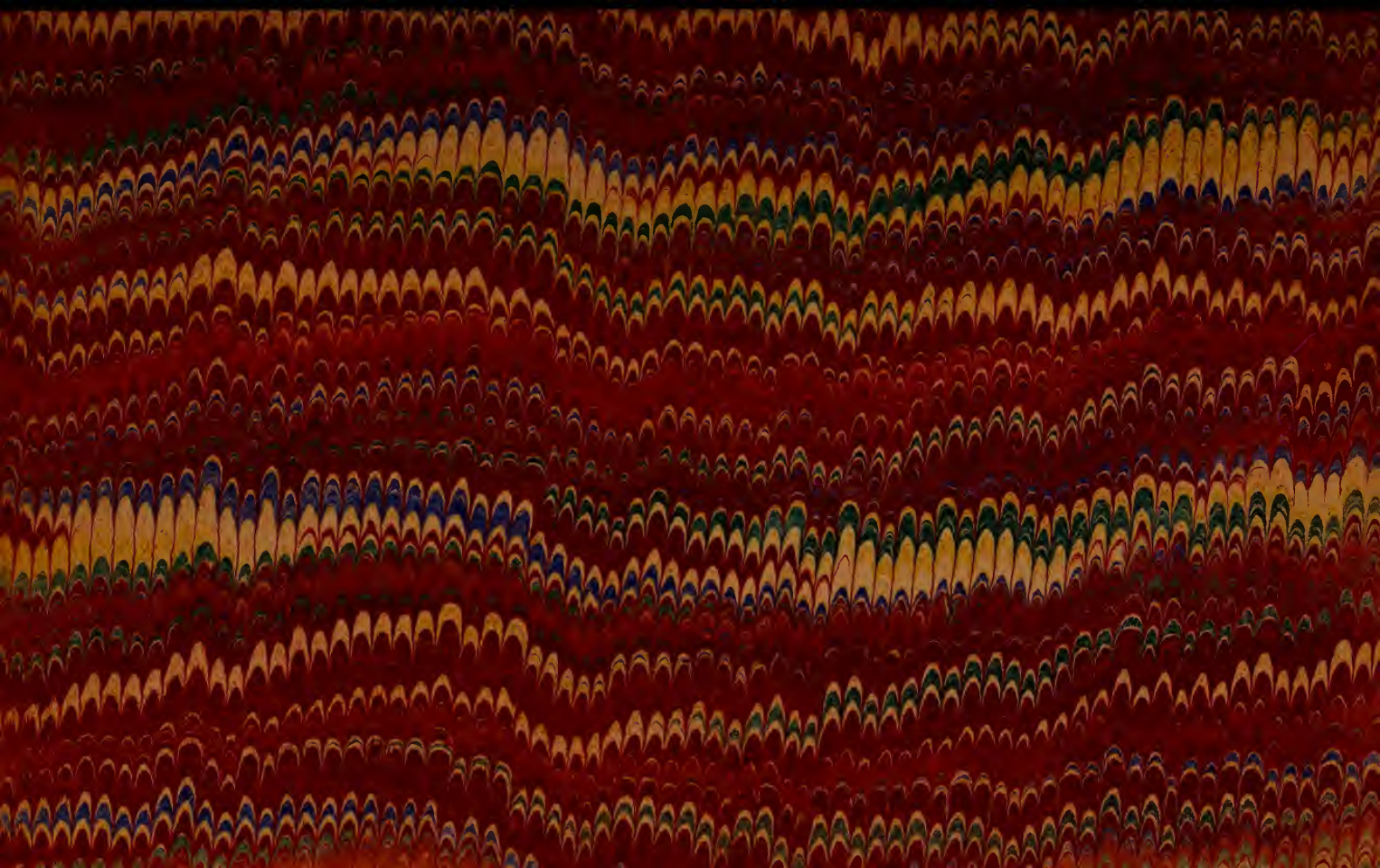

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